August 16, 1949

The Reporter

A fortnightly of facts and ideas

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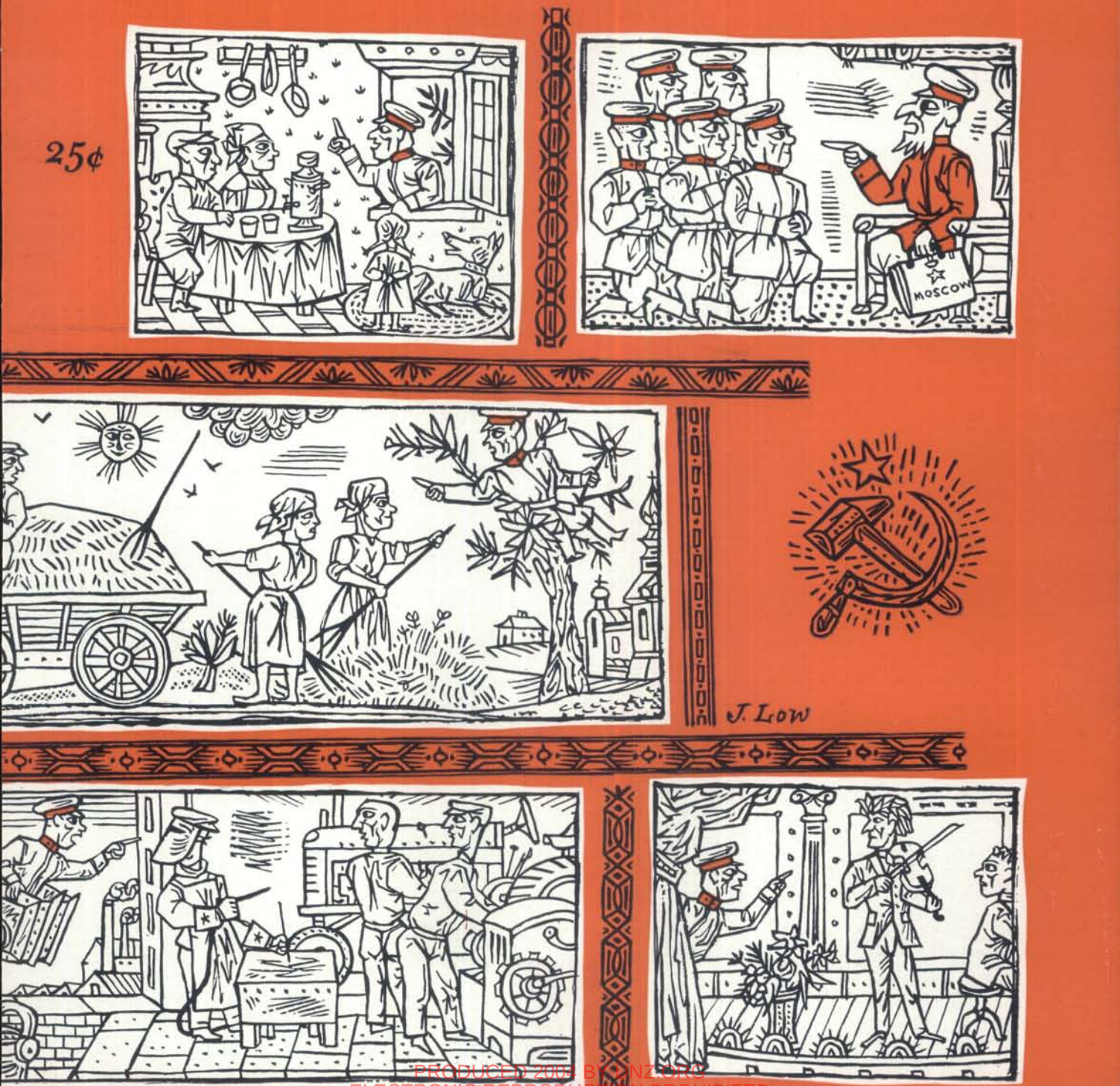

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The Reporter

A fortnightly of facts and ideas

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The Soviet Man

In this issue, we look at the Soviet schoolboy—and he wants to be a tank commander or a committee chairman instead of a ballplayer or a locomotive engineer. We look at the soldier, the farmer, the worker, and see a desperate uniformity.

The Soviet people, half the world away, are yet so close to us now that we can feel them breathing down our necks. Man is never totally motionless or uniform; even the Soviet man changes. With common sense, we can affect that change.

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Editorial

The Soviet Man

Our theme, in this issue, is the Soviet man. We don't go into the ideological problems of Communism; we don't try to unscramble the figures that Soviet statisticians present to prove that the Five-Year Plan was executed in four years; and, most emphatically, we don't venture any prediction as to what will happen when Stalin dies. We do try to see the Soviet régime through the human beings it has molded. There are about 193 million of these human beings. Ideologists and statisticians may always change their tunes, according to prevailing hatreds and available jobs. Stalin may any day join Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great in the limbo of history. But the Soviet man is a more enduring, formidable fact, perhaps the most important fact of our contemporary life. We may not care to know what there is in his mind, or, to use the colloquial expression, what makes him tick. But for our own survival we must try to see clearly what he is to us.

It is a shallow, diplomatic half-truth to say that he is our neighbor. Actually, we are related much more closely than that. We are locked together. Should his or our posture suddenly change, we or he would be thrown completely off balance. The grip we have on each other, muscle to muscle, is the contemporary form of what used to be called the balance of power.

At present we are the restraining element in Soviet politics. Every totalitarian state is a runaway state. Our policy of containment is a crude external substitute for those internal checks that the Soviet government doesn't have. On the other hand, this colossal block of numbed humanity has a strange effect on our ways of thinking and living. We cannot sleep easily on account of the Soviet man, for we know that he is powerful and his mind unfathomable. We like to say that the very fact of his closeness to us, and of his threat, should prod us to correct the wrongs in our political and social order. But the feeling of dangerous emergency is not conducive to a thorough re-examination of our basic values.

It would be irresponsible to dismiss lightly some portents which are inherent in such a situation—portents equally ominous for the Soviet man and for ourselves. Our policy of containment may check the blind aggressiveness of totalitarianism, but it may at the same time contribute to the further hardening of the Soviet internal order. On the other hand, with our preparedness and fears determined by the ever-present threat of the Soviet man, we may gradually, with the best of patriotic and democratic intentions, become like him.

In this issue of *The Reporter,* men who have lived in Russia give us a series of pictures of the Soviet man. These reports make it quite clear that he is so conditioned as to have no sense of what active freedom means. Two of the four freedoms that President Roosevelt proclaimed—the freedoms *of*—are inconceivable to him, even when he has run away from Soviet Russia. He cannot even remotely grasp what freedom of expression or of religion means, or the idea that the individual may have a range of independence, recognized by the state, within which he can cultivate his privacy.

The Soviet man is thoroughly aware, however, of the two freedoms *from*—since his enjoyment of them is completely at the mercy of the government. They are what may be called the two negative freedoms. Animals become domesticated when they are granted secure freedom from fear and want. A wise political order is one that satisfies the two animal freedoms and goes beyond them to the other two—the freedoms *of,* the positive freedoms of the human person. But the Soviet régime could not survive if the Soviet man

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were ever to be relieved from the obsession of fear and want. If he could ever achieve the negative freedoms, he would start longing for the positive ones.

To a very large extent, because the Soviet man is so close to us and because his masters have tried to deprive him of the chance of ever becoming a person, we are responsible for him. He is not a free agent—but we are. We can understand him without hating him. He has no choice but to hate us. This amputated section of mankind, this packed, overcharged mass of humanity, will probably act toward us according to its distorted notions of our actions and intentions. At present the Russian people are told that we are preparing to wage war on them.

War is not the instrument that may settle our relationship with the Soviet man or loosen his grip on us. We should have learned something from our last total war on totalitarianism. Last time there were mistakes that we had to fall into and that perhaps were inevitable because of our lack of previous experience. Now we should know better. Last time we asked for the unconditional surrender of the enemy. At least as far as Germany was concerned, in spite of what Mr. Bevin said recently, we probably had no choice. But certainly the surrender of Germany multiplied the cost of victory.

We know now that after a total war the defeated people become a total charge of the victorious nation. Should we win a total war against the Soviet Union, we would be in no condition to deal with the formidable section of mankind that had surrendered to us, for we could never dream of having the wealth and the skill that the reconstruction of Russia would demand. We know now what a burden the ERP is, and even the most narrow-minded Congressmen must somehow reconcile themselves to the fact that the effort toward the reconstruction of Europe may be continued beyond 1952. We cannot conceive of a Russian Recovery Program. Where could we ever find the money to carry through an RRP?

We know now that what we destroy we must rebuild, that the expenses for the bomb that wrecked Hiroshima were just the first installment of the total cost for the settlement of Japan and Asia. We also know, or we should know, that the work of rehabilitation can never be done unless we gain a measure of assistance from the people we have bombed out.

Of course we cannot tell all this to the Soviet man, for our words either do not reach him or else they carry a meaning that he is quite unable to grasp. Yet whatever we say is, in some perverted fashion, conveyed to him by the apparatus of his régime. This is why we should check our words and thought with the most relentless sense of responsibility. The warmongers and the peacemongers in our midst can precipitate us as well as the Soviet man into irreparable disaster, for appeals for war stir up Soviet patriotism, and appeals for peace-at-any-price unleash Soviet aggressiveness.

Because we are so locked together, we must let the Soviet man feel our strength, our firmness, and our wisdom. It is distressing to have to rely on communication through feelings and not through words and ideas. Yet we must take this chance. The Soviet man must be made to sense that we have no intention of waging war on him, that we don't want him to become our ward, that above all we rely on his indestructible humanity. The colossal laboratory experiment which is being conducted on his skin cannot succeed in eradicating from his soul the urge for relaxation and privacy and peace.

In the last war, we were hypnotized by the leaders who were against us and by the horrible ideologies for which they stood. We thought the only solution was to destroy these leaders and to atomize their nations. This time there is no use in focusing too much of our attention on Mr. Stalin's mustache and intentions, nor should we be driven to hopelessness about ever reaching a meeting of minds with what now is the Soviet man because of the incompatibility between his ideology and ours.

What is written about the Soviet man in this issue of *The Reporter* makes clear how anxious the Soviet people are to reach a degree of freedom from fear and from want—freedoms that cannot be left to the mercy of an oligarchic group. This anxiety is unexpressed and—under the present conditions—inexpressible. But it is there, and it is destined to grow, the more torturing the control of the régime becomes. More nobody can say, and no one can predict what the Soviet people are going to do for themselves, when, and how.

But we can account for the influence that our strength and our wisdom can have on the development of Soviet affairs—which is great. The kind of political and social order that may one day emerge from Russia will probably be extremely different from the one we are familiar with in our western world. Yet we might have to deal with it, even if it will not have such standard features as a multi-party system, or bicameral legislation. All these things may happen perhaps sooner than we expect if we trust the inalienable humanity of the Soviet man and if we are firm and poised in the use of our power.

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My Soviet School Days

An American who was educated in the U.S.S.R. recalls the idolatry, narrowness, and fervor he picked up from kindergarten to senior high

Ten years ago, when I was a high-school student in Moscow, I wanted to be a tank commander in the Red Army. As the son of a Soviet Russian mother and an American correspondent long friendly to the U.S.S.R., I had attended regular Soviet schools for a decade, from kindergarten on up. I was so unreservedly pro-Soviet that I had been elected president of my class and editor of the high-school newspaper before my family took me to the United States in 1939.

Becoming a Red Army officer was more than merely the adventurous, glamorous, and popular thing to do. I had another motive—one that is fostered as carefully among Soviet children as getting ahead on one's own is among Americans. That is the creed that nothing is so sacred, attractive, and rewarding as service to "the cause." This means service to the state, and to the cause of Socialism and its Soviet fatherland for a better and happier world.

As I think back now, this stress on social consciousness was one of the features of Soviet education that I liked best. The students had an earnestness, civic-mindedness, and sense of purpose that I did not find later in American schools. Soviet education completely identifies eagerness in study with devotion to the state and "the cause." The first task of a school child in the U.S.S.R., according to a recent government decree, is "to strive with tenacity and perseverance to master knowledge in order to become an educated and cultured person and to serve most fully the Soviet motherland."

This does not mean that Soviet schools, or at least those I attended, did not have their share of loafers and teachers' pets. But the zeal of the whole "socialist experiment" tended to make students unusually serious and high-minded. The pace of schoolwork, as a consequence, was far more rigorous than any I have encountered in the United States.

Foreigners accustomed to the power-diplomacy and the totalitarian high-handedness of the U.S.S.R. may underrate another aspect of Soviet indoctrination that I observed throughout my schooling in Russia. It was permeated with references to social justice and democracy. While Hitlerism, for instance, not only enforced popular submission to the state but also idealized such devotion, the U.S.S.R. practices totalitarianism but teaches its citizenry to revere ideals that are basically western and not authoritarian.

Two non-western idols were, of course, venerated even more: the U.S.S.R. and Marxism. We were taught most emphatically and persistently that no other society had ever existed in which the average person was as free, as well off, and as important in the running of his government as in the Soviet Union. Nor was any nation ever as great, as wealthy, or as advanced. Furthermore, no government ever catered as lovingly to every possible need of its people.

Soviet children were convinced—and were proud in their conviction—that everything in Russia was vastly superior to everything anywhere else—even if these same children were greatly awed by what they heard about American machines and cities. I spent the summer of 1936 in the Crimea at Camp Artek, the outstanding resort for children from all over the country. The famous Frenchman, André Gide, visited the camp, and it fell to me to show him around. Later he quoted my running commentary, without exaggeration, in his book *Return from the USSR:* "Just look! There was nothing here till quite recently . . . and then suddenly—this staircase appeared. And it's like that everywhere in the Soviet Union. Yesterday nothing; tomorrow everything. Look at those workmen over there, how hard they're working! And everywhere in the Soviet Union there are schools and camps like these . . .

"And here—look at this wall! Could you possibly tell that it had been built in ten days?" Gide's comment is: "The child's enthusiasm seemed so sincere that I took good care not to point out that this retaining wall which had been too hastily constructed was already fissured."

Our passionate acclamation of the Soviet system was matched by our horror of the past and of the outside world. Pre-Soviet Russia had been an utterly black period: Life, for anybody except the Tsar's debauched favorites and the capitalistic few, had been unbearable slavery. The new pursuit of *kultura* in Russian schools was contrasted to the

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former total lack of such opportunities for the parents of most Soviet children.

The world outside the U.S.S.R. was, we were taught, no better than pre-Soviet Russia. Before I saw Britain, France, and America ten years ago, I was sure that they were brutal dictatorships of a few billionaire monopolists, in which the rest of the people were far poorer than the populace of the U.S.S.R. We were told, to be sure, that these countries, particularly the United States, were still ahead of Russia in technology, and that they *claimed* to be democratic. But there were official slogans to the effect that the U.S.S.R. would "catch up with and overtake America." We were positive that the capitalist type of democracy could never be anything but a sham, and that plutocrats, and their "liberal" toadies, had rigged up this fake democracy to befuddle and exploit the long-suffering working people.

Always behind the ideological instruction we got in the schools was the doctrine of "Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism." All my teachers sought to imbue us with absolute faith in "scientific Marxism." They started by firing us with zeal for the task of making all men happy, and by imbuing us with the Marxist conviction that Communism alone would succeed in that most noble enterprise, first in the U.S.S.R. and then throughout the world.

From my earliest days, I was peppered with references to the theory of Marxism. Many years before I ever understood the meaning of the term "dialectical materialism," I had heard it hailed dozens of times in school as the supremely scientific and completely infallible keystone of Marxism. Throughout Soviet schooling Marxist doctrine was applied to all topics and on all occasions. Speeches at high-school concerts or dances—and there always were speeches—invariably contained elaborate references to the infallible credo, and to the absurdity and fallaciousness of all the thought perpetrated in "bourgeois" countries.

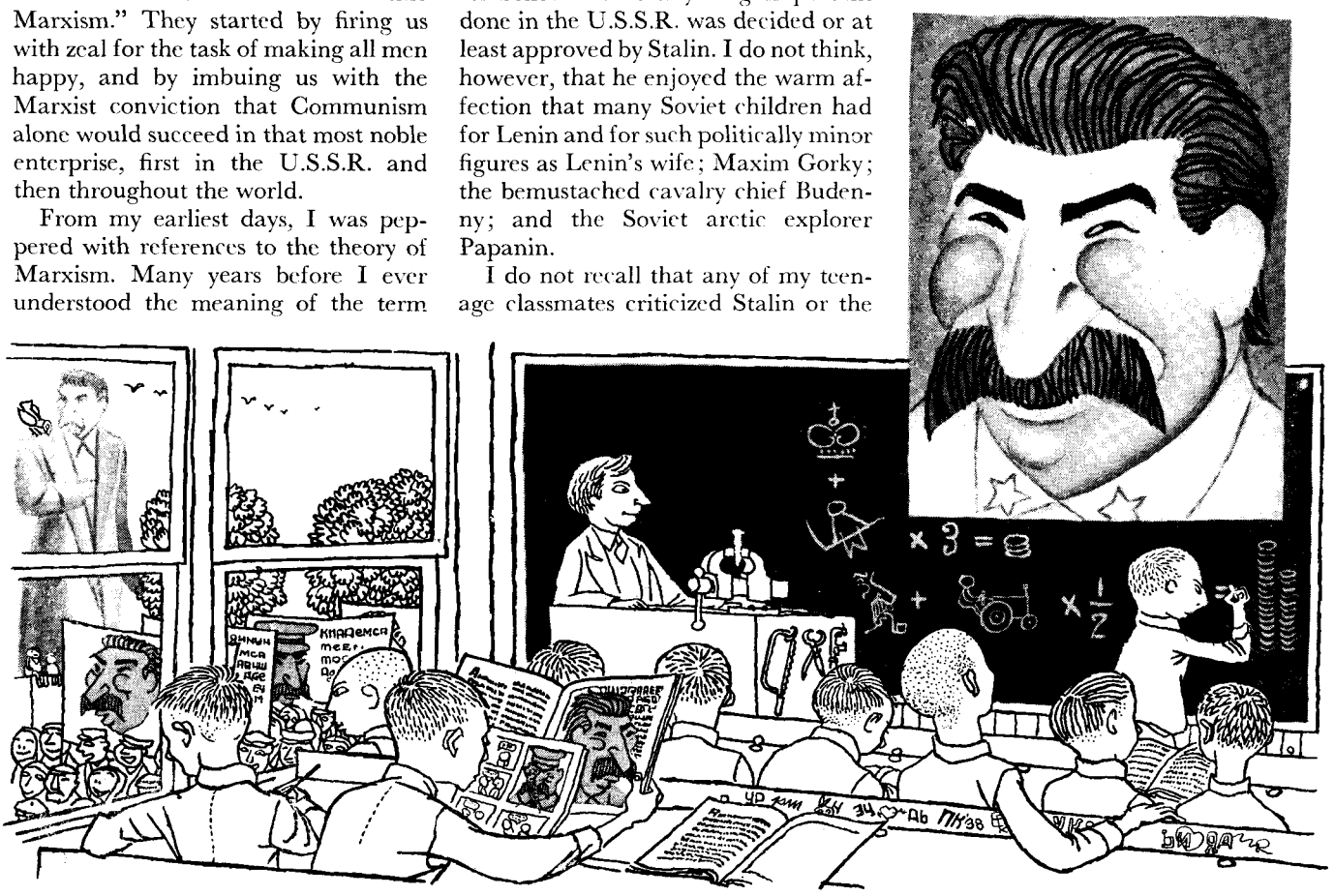
Stalin was presented in every school I attended as the central deity of Marxism as of all else, towering over the rest of mankind. Officially he was adulated as the heir to the mantle of Lenin, who, before him, had received the Scriptures from Karl Marx himself. Pictures of Stalin and quotes by and about him were plastered in almost every classroom and textbook. As editor of the high-school newspaper, I myself used to end articles almost automatically with the routine devotional formula, "Thank you, Comrade Stalin, for our happy childhood!"

My school friends and I never discussed how we felt about Stalin. But we all believed that anything important done in the U.S.S.R. was decided or at least approved by Stalin. I do not think, however, that he enjoyed the warm affection that many Soviet children had for Lenin and for such politically minor figures as Lenin's wife; Maxim Gorky; the bemustached cavalry chief Budenny; and the Soviet arctic explorer Papanin.

I do not recall that any of my teenage classmates criticized Stalin or the Soviet government in connection with the 1936-1938 purges, even though the parents of one-third of the children were purged. (Our school was situated across the Moscow River from the Kremlin, and contained many children of high officials.) The other kids did not visibly change their attitude toward those with delinquent parents. We did keep a day-by-day score of arrests.

When the father of my closest friend, a veteran member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was arrested, the boy was burning mad. But his anger was aimed—at the time, anyway—only at the rudeness and harshness of the secret-police officials who had arrested his parents and kept him from them. The sixteen-year-old daughter of the Commissar for Foreign Trade did not show her feelings upon her father's arrest. Soon thereafter, at a mass meeting of the whole school, she made the usual statement renouncing all ties with him, a proven enemy of the people and of her beloved Soviet government.

At the height of the purges, my mother raised a question about a family friend, a devoted Communist official,



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whom my brother and I idolized. Suppose, she asked, this man were found by the Soviet government to be a spy. My unhesitating answer was that I would merely be surprised at how cleverly the enemy in our ranks was able to disguise himself.

Of all the ideological commandments of Marxism, the one that was impressed most consistently upon my mind was that sooner or later Socialism would spread to every corner of the world. In the process, the capitalist powers must inevitably attempt to make war against the U.S.S.R. I and my schoolmates had the unshakable conviction that Russia was viciously encircled and threatened by capitalist armies, which were merely waiting to pounce on it.

Soviet education is, of course, wholly directed by the central government. There are no private schools, nongovernment textbooks, or private teachers (except for part-time tutoring in foreign languages, music, or painting). In the schools I went to, all courses were required: There was no such thing as an "elective."

After 1917, the Russian educational system had gone through a stage of drastic expansion and experimentation. The authority of parents and teachers over youth was decried by Communist leaders as a hangover from tsarist oppression and bourgeois conventionality. Students were encouraged to rebel. Homework, examinations, marks, and discipline were all abolished. In each school the Communist student groups decided on the curriculum and even on the tenure of the instructors.

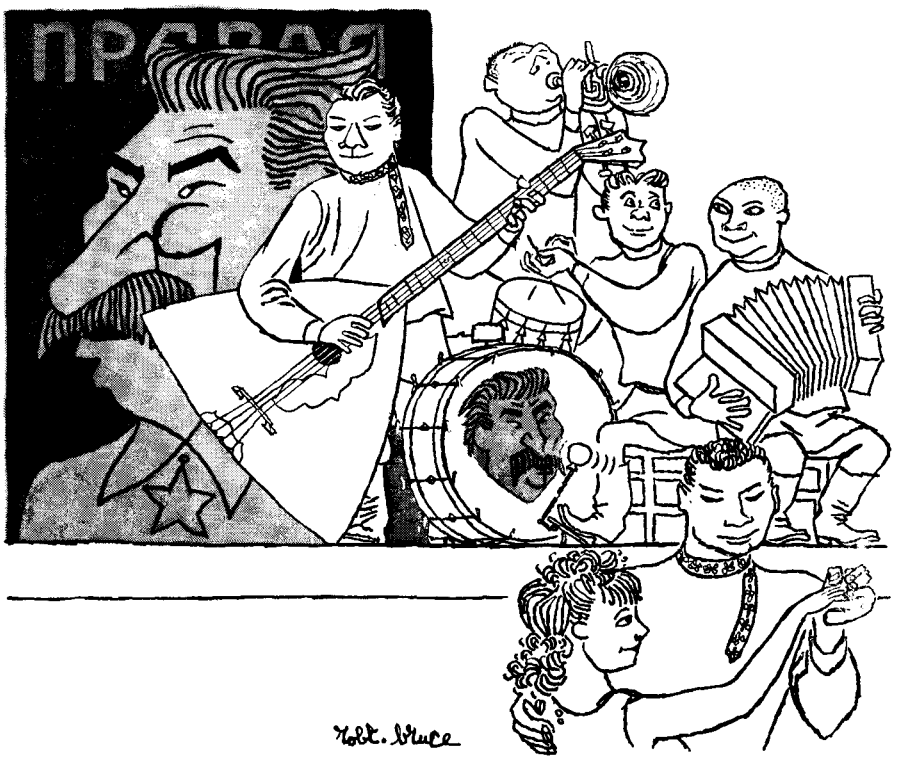
By the middle of the 1930's, this early "progressivism" came to an end in education, as it did in other institutions such as law and the family. The whole trend pointed toward more stability and far stricter discipline. As a rather ill-behaved child, I soon discovered on my own person what the new authority of the teacher meant. I didn't like it.

Two striking changes took place in the schools of the U.S.S.R. during the Second World War. The first was the imposition of a tuition fee for most students in the last three years of secondary education. This change required an amendment to the Stalin Constitution of 1936, in which secondary education had been guaranteed free of charge. The second change was the elimination of coeducational instruction.

A third, which has occurred since the war, was already presaged in the 1930's. In the earlier years I had heard merciless condemnation of Russia's pre-Soviet rulers as cruel oppressors and exploiters of the masses. Now the same tsars and generals are glorified. This change, which was high-lighted by the two nationalist movies, "Alexander Nevsky" and "Ivan the Terrible," and by a new history textbook officially blessed by Stalin, parallels the conservative trends in Soviet law, education, marriage, and divorce.

Only during the war, however, did the Soviet leaders play down Marxism and world revolution. Just before it Marxism and Russian nationalism were blended together more and more. Since the war that symbiosis has been intensified, in what has become officially known as "Soviet patriotism." This, the Soviets insist, has no kinship to "bourgeois chauvinism." But the ever-increasing official claims of Soviet primacy in all fields mark a great departure from the cultural internationalism that I and my Soviet schoolmates had drilled into us.

I had few, if any, doubts about the Soviet system when I left Russia after ten years of schooling there. But I began to encounter new realities and ideas, as well as new facts about the U.S.S.R. before very long. I presently started to realize how systematically my judgment had been warped and distorted. As I began to respect more and more non-Communist individuals and causes, my faith in Sovietism began to falter. Until there is a domestic or international crisis, we are not likely to know whether Soviet education has succeeded in innoculating the younger generation against similar ideological disaffection. —George Fischer



"As to the individuals . . . that I met at Moscow, 'tis impossible to be in their Company without recollecting that they are Subjects under a Despotism, for in their judgments *bad* & *good* literally appears to be synonymous with favour & disgrace."

Catherine Wilmot (1806)
from *The Russian Journals of Martha and Catherine Wilmot*

"The memory of what happened in the past belongs to the Tsar alone. He amends the annals of the nation at his good pleasure and dispenses daily to the people those historic truths which are consonant with the fiction of the moment."

Marquis de Custine
La Russie en 1839

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Russia: Postwar Moods

The signs of discontent are few and cloudy, but they suggest that history may not always remain at a standstill in the U.S.S.R.

Russia has not only been healing the terrible wounds that the war inflicted upon it, but has continued to expand its industry and culture into the vast Asiatic periphery. So much has been obvious to any student of Russia; and it is impressive enough. But what has been going on in the minds of the people who have been pumping water out of the flooded coal mines of the Donets, rebuilding the cities of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, founding new cities in and beyond the Urals, irrigating drought-stricken *kolkhoz* land, and planting protective belts of forest on it? What has been going on in the minds of the Soviet intellectuals, whom the régime has been continually treating to hot and icy showers, lauding them as the civilizing force in Soviet society, then picking on them for the obstinate vices of "cosmopolitanism" and "servile admiration for the West"?

On the surface, Russia appears to be immutably stable. Elsewhere, wartime rulers have died or been voted out of power, but not in the U.S.S.R. Only minor reshufflings have occurred in the *Politburo*. Nothing seems to have been altered or shifted for many years in the structure of society and in its political and cultural "superstructure." Day after day, newspapers carry the same sort of news, the same comment, the same eulogies of Stalin. It is easy to succumb to the uncanny feeling that, in that exceptional country, history, breaking all the laws of evolution, dialectical or otherwise, has come to a standstill.

The surface, as usual in Russia, is deceptive. One recalls that during the war the old Holy Russia of the Tsars, with its traditions and symbols, seemed to reappear from the depths. Then, toward the end of the war, and after it, fragments of revolutionary, Leninist Russia came to the top again. Ever since, queer official campaigns, one moment directed against nationalism and the next against cosmopolitanism, have been reflected onto the surface, testifying to mysterious commotions underneath.

It is difficult to define the trends in Russian society because the totalitarian organization of the state makes such trends inarticulate. No social or political tendencies can crystallize unless people have a modicum of freedom to express their views and form their ideas. But nothing can prevent people, even under totalitarian rule, from instinctively *feeling* in different ways about the major problems of their society. The fluctuations in Stalin's domestic policy can be explained only by the fact that his government understands how heterogeneous the Russian mind is. Even more difficult than tracing trends is trying to define their weight and strength. Only deductive reasoning or guesswork is possible.

In the first weeks after the armistice, I talked to crowds of Soviet citizens in west-German D.P. camps. The vast majority was preparing for repatriation. Only a few had made up their minds not to go home. The rest were motivated by ardent Soviet patriotism, or homesickness, or merely a wish to get back, whatever might be awaiting them in their homeland.

I put some questions to the inmates of several camps in an informal questionnaire, and we then took the answers up. The Russians turned out to be rather voluble. One question was: "Which is more important to you—Communism or the national Russian interest?" At first, about a quarter of the D.P.'s came out for Communism and another quarter for Russia, while the others seemed undecided. At last, though, the lines of division became blurred or faded altogether, when, sooner or later, somebody got up and said that there was no reason to choose between Communism or Russia; the interests of the two were identical.

This was how the D.P.'s who wished to return to Russia reacted. The prevalent mood among those who were staying away was a mixture of extreme nationalism and fierce anti-Communism.

"Do you think," I then asked, "that

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public ownership and planned economy have justified themselves? Would you like to see private capital readmitted to Russia?" The answer was almost unanimous: "Our public ownership is good. We do not want any capitalism." As a rule, this answer came even from the anti-Communists who had refused repatriation. Only people from the lands that had come under Soviet rule as recently as 1939 and 1940 were, on the whole, opposed to public ownership. To the Soviet citizens proper, private enterprise appeared an almost ludicrous, as well as an anachronistic, concept.

A young mechanic from Dnepropetrovsk, who was not going back at once, told me this: "Life in Russia is unbearable, and that is why I have not returned home. You do not know what it means to live in constant fear of deportation to a labor camp and not to be able to speak one's mind." Yet he planned to return home eventually: "Life is nice here in the West," he went on. "I can talk to my heart's content. But it is a silly and degrading business to work for the private profit of another man, and not for the good of the community. I cannot stand this either. It will be a nice diversion to stay here, but I think I will have to go back. If only they gave us some freedom, there would be no country in the world better than ours."

"If only they gave us some freedom . . ."—how often these words recurred. But they had different meanings for different Russians. The farmers meant less taxation, less governmental requisitioning of agricultural produce, less control over the collective farms, and perhaps also a loose combination of private and collective farming. To an employee of the Soviet Military Administration in Berlin, talking without witnesses, "some freedom" meant disbandment of forced-labor camps, free access to foreign books and periodicals, free intellectual intercourse.

Some Soviet citizens, of course, were not concerned about freedom. Nadya Z., a girl in her early twenties and a former member of the *Komsomol*, was not returning to Russia because she had married a foreigner, but she could not understand criticism of the régime.

"But we *do* have freedom in Russia," she said.

"Well, do you have real elections?"

"Of course."

"How is that possible when people are not free to form separate groups or parties and put forward conflicting points of view? Don't you see that to elect means to *choose* between different views of parties?"

Nadya could not see what I was aiming at. "Why should there be two or three parties, when it is really much better for the people to be united behind a single party?" she asked. Nadya simply had no sense of freedom, at least of what the West means by freedom. She was in her early teens when the trials of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and Tukhachevsky took place. Of these events she had only the faintest memories ("Yes, father used to come home and read aloud something about it from the papers"); and all she knew about them was what she had been taught at school and in the Communist Youth. ("They weren't people of any importance, were they? Just a group of traitors who had to be punished.")

At least in some sections of Soviet society, the war and the subsequent contact between Russia and Europe weakened the habits of thought cultivated by the régime, and stirred a vague longing for freedom. During the war, partymen spread the rumor over the countryside that Stalin himself would order a "new deal" for the peasants when peace came. The millions of Russian soldiers who marched into foreign countries were, true enough, not converted into admirers of capitalism, as some people in the West all too wishfully thought. But many Soviet citizens began to see the unpleasant aspects of their political system and started thinking about improvements and reforms. Victorious feats of arms heightened their self-confidence: Surely, they, the proud victors of Stalingrad, Leningrad, and Moscow, the conquerors of Berlin and Vienna, were entitled to their own government's trust and to more liberal treatment. Such moods were expressed in poems, novels, and short stories. Immediately after the war there was indeed a visible relaxation of ideological control, partly as the result of economic and administrative confusion. The screws were loosened. Discussions, timid but real, on many topics of national interest cropped up in books and newspapers, to the astonishment of those who remembered the rigid uniformity of the prewar era.

It was in this context that Zhdanov initiated his ideological campaigns. They represented a massive attempt on the part of the rulers to force the Russia of the late 1940's back into the frame of mind of the late 1930's, to kill some of the hopes born during the war, and also to shake the people out of their postwar weariness and frustration. This endeavor has probably worked two ways: Every blow inflicted upon libertarian hopes breeds frustration, and frustration may impede the country's material and moral recovery.

The rulers have, up to a point, now succeeded in tightening the screws and reimposing the old disciplines. In this they have been helped by the demands of economic rehabilitation and by the gravity of the international crisis. Finding their political hopes thwarted, many intellectuals and workers have

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devoted themselves to jobs of construction and education. Stalin has opened inspiring vistas: the next three or four Five-Year Plans, which should bring Russia's industrial wealth nearly up to the American level. This objective will claim all the physical and mental energy of the generation that has now entered active life.

The diplomatic war, too, has had its domestic effects. The threat of war was bound to have a depressing effect upon a nation that lost about seven million people. Even with ceaseless diplomatic and propagandistic warfare, there has been no saber-rattling inside Russia, little brandishing of novel weapons, no warming up of militaristic moods. On the other hand, the war of diplomacy apparently has helped the government rally opinion and recreate stimuli to material and social progress, stimuli which might have been lost in postwar apathy. "Keep your old grim temper!" is the maxim of a somewhat puppetlike hero of a popular Russian postwar novel. It is also the theme of all the propaganda machines.

And yet it seems unlikely that the Russian mind has been pressed back altogether into the old molds of orthodoxy. The moral shock of the war cannot be altogether overcome, even though its effects may manifest themselves very slowly. Stalin's foreign policy, too, cannot help keeping up the domestic ferment. It is, in the long run, impossible for the Soviets to be one of the two greatest world powers, with a stake in every issue of international significance, and at the same time to keep the people in a state of narrow-minded, bizarre isolationism. Hence the queer campaigning against "cosmopolitanism"—that elastic and somewhat phony label for unorthodoxy.

Early this year, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* unwittingly threw a light upon significant intellectual stirrings. "Since when," one of the Russian writers criticized by the paper was quoted as asking, "do we speak about Russia and not about Europe, about Russian and not European culture?" Even more illuminating were the views attributed to a group of excommunicated men of letters. These, according to *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* protested against "primitive crudeness" in literature and drama, and against the habit of painting the world in black and white. Much more than a literary "deviation," an incipient political revolt, was revealed there. The "primitive crudeness" in literature and art have merely reflected the same features in official politics and in the Stalinist outlook at large; and it may be only a matter of time before the criticism turns from the secondary to the primary manifestations of that "primitive crudeness."

In this development one may see, paradoxically, the result of the civilizing work done by the régime. It is precisely because Stalinism has, in its own way, done so much for the education of the new Russian generation that it has become more and more difficult for the advanced elements of the nation to reconcile themselves to the "primitive crudeness" of the Soviet officialdom.

One deviation doesn't, of course, make a revolt. Symptoms of literary unorthodoxy are not signs of an imminent political upheaval. But in Russian history, the swallows that portend political change have more than once made their first appearance over the fields of literature. In the post-Napoleonic era, political restiveness among men of letters foreshadowed the famous Decembrist rising of 1825. That rising had its origins in the Napoleonic Wars and the way in which they brought Russia and Europe together. It took ten years before the dissatisfaction of literary men was followed by political revolt. Nobody can say whether or in what way history is going to repeat itself; but the indications of a repetition are certainly too many to be ignored.

History has not come to a standstill, even at Stalin's command. A Russian officer I met casually expressed this conviction in a curious way. I asked what city he came from. He mentioned a town that was some years ago renamed Ordzhonikidze, in honor of one of Stalin's late, close associates. "What was the previous name of the place?" I asked. "It was Zinoviev," he said. "And before that, it had been named after a famous Tsarina."

"Do you think its present name will endure?" I asked. "Oh, history is a great reviser," the officer answered philosophically. "It will still revise many a name and revalue many a value."

—Isaac Deutscher

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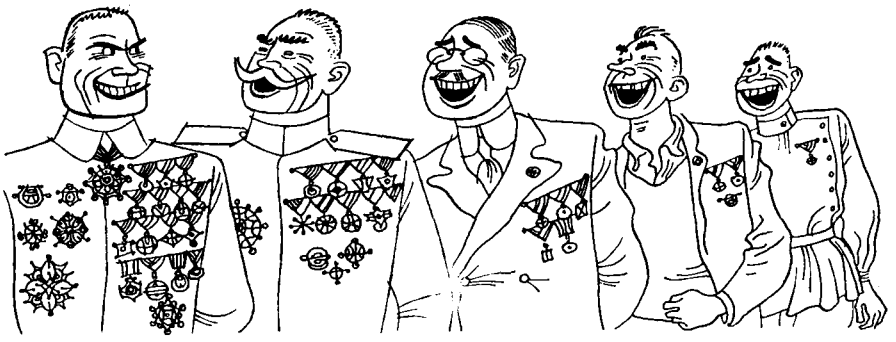
Classes in the 'Classless' State

Russia has four—upper, middle, lower and still lower; but only one enjoys power, prestige, and the comforts of life



The Soviet Union, according to its supporters, bristles with virtues, not the least of which is that it is classless. The old social and economic divisions, they claim, have been abolished, and no new ones have arisen to distinguish a member of the *Politburo,* say, from a man who distributes feed to collective livestock. Actually, however, it turns out that present-day Russians are divided into four classes, the upper two of which are hard to get into and the lower two almost impossible to get out of. Though they have no names, the first three correspond roughly to the upper, middle, and lower classes of non-Soviet societies. The fourth has no equivalent anywhere in the West.

The upper class is surprisingly small —a few thousand persons all together— and composed exclusively of top-ranking members of the Communist Party and their families. Until recently, it also included quite a few marshals, scientists, artists, and the like, who were not Communists but whom the party leaders graciously allowed to share some of their privileges. In the last few years, these men have been given the choice of joining the party or descending in the social and economic scale. Most have chosen to join.

A person was a nobleman in the old aristocracies by virtue of having been born into a family of noblemen, but the privileged position of most of these houses could be traced back to some ancestor who had helped establish a new dynasty, or conquered a province, or did something similarly glorious. The modern Russian aristocracy, too, is founded on glorious deeds of the past—the conquest of power on October 25, 1917. The upper class consists of survivors of the heroic group that seized power, together with younger men specially selected for their loyalty and their ability to help perpetuate the new order. Many of the October heroes have died naturally. Others, who did not understand that the new quasi-aristocracy was led by a quasi-monarch, have been exiled or executed. In recent years, the sons of certain members, such as Zhdanov and Stalin, have been admitted into the upper class. The younger Zhdanov, however, seems to have been dropped since the death of his father.

The Russian aristocracy has about the same privileges as the western aristocracies of several centuries ago. Its members participate in the exercise of power; their share in the national income is incomparably higher than that of the rest of the population; and they monopolize social prestige.

Although all of those in the upper class have wide power, each does not have an equal say in policymaking. There is, of course, a supreme leader whose word is final. Below him there are a few aristocrats, perhaps the thirteen members of the *Politburo,* who are usually in complete control of particular branches of administration. Under them, there are other men exerting power in more restricted areas, and so on. There are, finally, men of science and letters, recently brought into the upper class, such as the academician Lysenko, the master of Soviet genetics, or the Arctic explorer O. Schmidt, who claims that he has created a theory that will replace Einstein's theory of relativity. Such men are often responsible for the direction and supervision of various realms of cultural activity.

The members of the aristocracy dress well (their wives have fur coats and jewels), and live in good apartments and pleasant summer cottages. They are given automobiles and the best railway reservations. When they are bored, they can obtain theater and concert tickets, and when they are tired, they seek relief at palaces in the Crimea and the Caucasus.

Finally, they have enormous social prestige. Their speeches and their opinions are reported in papers; their pictures are displayed everywhere; their wisdom, patriotism, and integrity are constantly extolled. One of the favorite occupations of some members of the inferior classes is to compute the relative importance of the aristocrats by comparing the number of lines devoted to their speeches, and the size and the frequency of their photographs in newspapers.

Immediately below the upper class is another minority group, but a much

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larger one—the Soviet version of the middle class. It consists of a few million party and nonparty men—army officers, engineers, accountants, professors, doctors, journalists, authors, lesser musicians and artists, and chairmen of large collective farms.

Unlike the upper class, this one is not self-perpetuating. Membership in it is granted and cancelled by the upper class, which makes its selection on the basis of the loyalty and technical ability of the candidates. Formal education, and sometimes higher education, is the usual criterion of eligibility; but frequently an uneducated person can get into this class by exceptional performance. The earlier Stakhanovites, the workers who launched and promoted the speed-up movement in Soviet industry, were promoted into the middle class after their education had been brushed up somewhat. More and more frequently, however, the children of members of this class are chosen to join it. They usually have the necessary schooling and their parents impart to them the "know-how" so important in the performance of the social obligations of the class.

The members of the middle class have no voice in political decisions. They do, however, manage the industrial, commercial, and cultural institutions of the country and carry out the routine business of administration.

Their share of the national income is lower than that of the upper class, but substantially higher than that of the classes below them. The difference between the standards of living is surprising for a society created to abolish social inequality. Middle-class families get decent, if not epicurean, food; once in a while, they can buy a suit or a pair of shoes. The women wear hats which sharply distinguish them from their less privileged sisters, who, instead, use kerchiefs or scarves. Middle-class families live in small but private homes. They can often travel—not as comfortably as the members of the upper class; they get an occasional chance to go to plays or concerts.

The members of the middle class do not enjoy the personal prestige of the upper class; but now and then they receive a publicized pat on the back. Moreover, the group has a collective prestige inherited from pre-revolutionary Russia, in which intellectual work was considered highly superior to manual labor.

The lower class includes the vast majority of the Russian population, eighty-five or even ninety per cent. This class is divided into three groups:—the lowest-ranking intellectual workers with relatively little education; the manual workers of industry, trade, and transportation; and the peasants, who today are almost without exception collectivized. The lower class has no power, directly or indirectly. On the average its members earn enough only for the bare necessities of life. The acquisition of a new suit or even of a pair of shoes is a family problem, involving grave decisions, such as sending an adolescent son or daughter to work. Except in villages, the people of the lower class live in old, dilapidated, and unbelievably overcrowded houses. Travel is out of the question; the only amusement they get is that which the government occasionally furnishes free of charge. Life is spent in unique preoccupation with sheer survival.

This class is less homogeneous than the upper and middle ones. The intellectuals are envied by the manual workers and peasants. The peasantry, alone among Russian classes, is strictly hereditary: Nobody can belong to it who has not been born into it.

Below all these groups is the class of state slaves, prisoners confined to labor camps—several million in all. Their food, clothes, and shelter are below the survival level, and they are treated as enemies of the people—the absolute negative pole of prestige.

The entire Soviet class structure today is pervaded by the spirit of hierarchy. Not only soldiers, but also men in civil services have been assigned ranks and uniforms. Medals and orders of merit, which are distributed in large numbers, are ostentatiously displayed. Differences of social standing are formalized in the relative size of office desks, the quality of office furniture, seating arrangements at table, precedence when having to pass through a door, and the tone of voice when addressing a superior or an inferior. The evolution of the new social hierarchy is even symbolized linguistically by the recent return to the old Tsarist custom of addressing subordinates with the familiar "thou." The subordinates use their chiefs' full titles.

Class distinctions in the U.S.S.R. are also tending to become hereditary. Education is now a highly important criterion of class membership, and since October, 1940, high schools and institutions of higher learning have been charging tuition fees, which are not exorbitant, but still well above the means of a lower-class family. The model schools, another new development, are reserved for upper- and middle-class children, who get preference in occupational appointments. Moreover, saving money and investing it in interest-bearing state bonds are legal, and so is the building of family houses. Bonds and houses can be bequeathed to children, and the inheritance tax is far from being confiscatory. Devices such as these perpetuate the privileges of the upper and middle classes.

—N. S. TIMASHEFF

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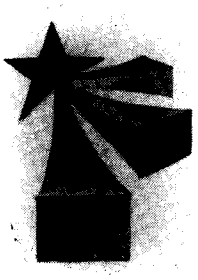
Soviet Ward Heelers

Exhorting, cajoling, answering, discussing—sometimes even listening—the Soviet agitator serves as middleman between the regime and the people



In the United States the word agitator may still be heard at times in the lounges of the stuffier clubs. It vaguely connotes one who tries by impolite methods to jar the underpinnings of capitalism. In the Soviet Union, however, an agitator is a very specific kind of person—a man of official honor and importance. Instead of attempting to destroy the prevailing system, he is intent on keeping it going. Persuasion by agitators and coercion by secret police are the ways in which the Soviet dictatorship protects itself against malcontents.

Both in theory and practice, the Soviets place a great deal of emphasis on swaying the populace by propaganda and agitation. Propaganda is usually reserved for the intellectuals; agitation is directed at the masses. The government has concentrated absolute control of all the mediums of communication—press, radio, and films—in the hands of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Its job is to feed the people party policy, and to induce them to swallow it as cheerfully as possible. To the extent that the *Agitprop* performs its work successfully, the regime may spend less money on the MVD.

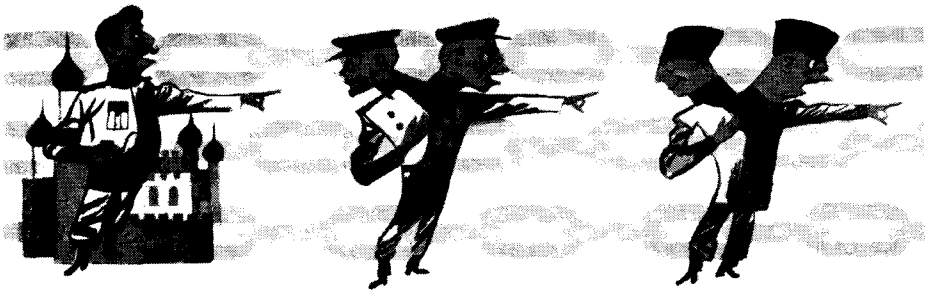
As chief persuader for the party and the state, the Bolshevik agitator, according to party journals, is supposed to "talk things over with the people." During lunch hour in a factory or on a collective farm he gathers the workers around him and does his best to "agitate" them, in the special Communist sense of the word. This he may do by reading them an important article from *Pravda* or a local newspaper, or giving them a summary of the day's news. At other times he may deliver a brief talk on some general topic such as Soviet foreign policy or the Five-Year Plan, and then encourage controlled discussion. He may review the production record of the work group and urge its members to greater effort. Always, the agitator is expected not only to talk, but to be first in every new movement—to "agitate by example." He must be prepared to lambaste, at a moment's notice, those whom the party declares are enemies, and to praise those in special favor. He is the local voice of the party.

Every shop and factory, almost every collective farm and apartment house, has at least one agitator. During the nation-wide elections in 1946, the party mobilized more than three million. Ordinarily, two million are in service at a time—one for every sixty-five persons over the age of fifteen in the Soviet Union. All agitators take up this work "voluntarily." Each local party organization designates certain of its members for agitation duties, though in rural areas it may use sympathizers—"non-party Bolsheviks."

Naturally, the party does not give the agitator much leeway in the performance of his duties. Once selected, he automatically joins a group known as the Agitators' Collective, which meets once or twice a week under the supervision of the local party chief. At these meetings, instructions are handed down as to the themes that the agitators are to stress during the coming week. They are supplied with handbooks, and receive a semimonthly journal, *The Agitator's Guidebook,* which is filled with useful advice. Before the war it had a circulation of 650,000, larger than that of any other Soviet magazine. It still doesn't need any high-pressure circulation schemes.

Despite the party's solicitude for the agitator, his lot is not altogether enviable. His position is delicate because he is caught between two crushing pressures—the party from above, the people from below. His only out is to shirk his duties, and for this he is constantly under fire from the party press, which charges that official lists of agitators are heavily padded.

If life in the Soviet Union were easier, the agitator's task would be much simpler and more pleasant. But things have been consistently hard, and much of his time is spent explaining new tasks to the people: more production, less waste, greater cleanliness in shop and living quarters, better work discipline. Occasionally he is asked "difficult" or "painful" questions, such as why there are still queues in front of the stores,



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or why managers make so much more than workers. These questions, according to the party, are tests of his "Bolshevik tempering," and he is instructed not to dodge them but to give a fighting answer "full of the stuff of the Party Spirit."

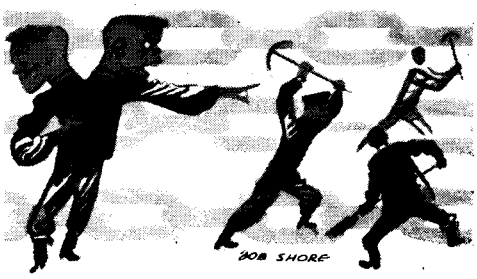
The agitator is not a professional; he cannot deliver his message and then move on to the next shop. When his stint is completed, he returns to his regular job as workman or foreman, eating with the same group, living in the same neighborhood. The chore of pushing his fellow workers to greater and greater efforts puts a strain on his personal relationships.

The job has its attractive aspects, though. As bearer of whatever good news happens to come along, as one of the important sources of information about the outside world, the agitator often gets satisfaction from his job.

Agitators are not only the voice of party and state; they are also important channels for transmitting to party leaders the feelings of the masses. No men in the Soviet Union, with the possible exception of the MVD, have clearer and more intimate knowledge of what the people are thinking. Their existence helps to explain why a system as rigid as that in Russia has been able to function for more than thirty years without serious internal explosions.

Thus, in some ways, the agitator is a kind of Soviet Gallup pollster; in many others, he is comparable to the ward heeler of American politics. Like the Democratic or Republican party worker, he provides other citizens with a means of communication with those in power, and he performs favors for which they are expected to thank the party.

But comparisons with the multi-party systems of democratic societies should not be carried too far. Unlike the Democrats or Republicans, the Soviet Communist Party always holds, in one hand, the whip of the secret police.



From the Agitator's Handbook . . .

For his convenience the Bolshevik Agitator is provided with a 323-page handbook that includes a short dictionary of political terms he might use in his work. Here are a few definitions:

GANGSTER — bandit; participant in gang. Gangsterism is widespread in the United States.

BOOM—uproar; sensation; stock-exchange boom—artificial rise in prices of goods and stocks; boom is artificially created by big capitalists to secure profits.

LYNCHING—lynch law in the United States, brutal reprisals against Negroes and revolutionary workers. Lynching is a feature of American reality, an indication of the savage morals encouraged by the American bourgeoisie for the purpose of strengthening its class rule.

DEMOCRACY—people's power, political structure under which power belongs to the people. Soviet socialist democracy is genuine people's power. All state power in the U.S.S.R. belongs to the workers of town and country. Through the Soviets of workers' deputies, the Stalin Constitution guarantees the development of Soviet democracy, the most consistent democracy in the world. In the U.S.S.R. the equality of all workers has been achieved regardless of sex, nationality, and race. Bourgeois democracy is another matter. Bourgeois democracy is one of the forms of bourgeois dictatorship, camouflaged by so-called representative organs—parliaments, municipal and rural self-governments. Bourgeois democracy, which conceals the dictatorship of capitalist monopolies, exists in the United States, Britain, and other countries.

POLITICAL REACTION — resistance of moribund classes to social progress. Everything that supports the outmoded capitalist system, the rule of the bourgeoisie, belongs to reaction, to the reactionary camp. The main support and leading force of world reaction since the Second World War is United States imperialism.

VETO—a Latin word meaning "I forbid." Veto has great significance in the work of the Security Council of the UN where most important decisions are adopted only when none of the permanent members of the council votes against them. The demand for unanimity of the great powers in decisions of basic questions is an important guaranty of the successful struggle for peace and security. That is why Anglo-American imperialists attack the voting principle established by the UN Charter and attempt by all means to abolish the right of veto.

APOLITICAL—indifference to political life; e.g., bourgeoisie strives to instill apolitical attitude in working people in order to distract their attention from the struggle against the capitalist system.

CORRUPTION—bribery, venality of political and public figures of bourgeois states: Ministers, Members of Parliament, officials, journalists. Corruption is a widely developed feature of capitalist countries, where the bourgeoisie bribes officials of the state apparatus, using them for carrying out measures and policies advantageous to this or that capitalist monopoly.

APOLOGIST—of capitalism: bourgeois scientists, right-wing socialists, Trotskyites, and other bourgeois agents.

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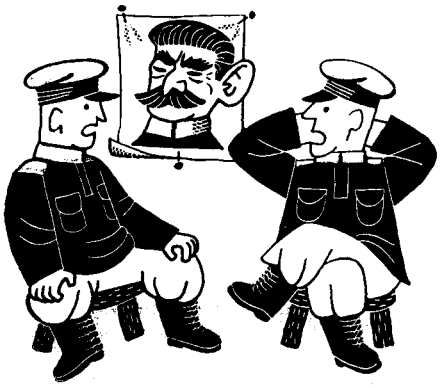
Soldier, Farmer, Worker



'The Gray Life'

Private Ivan Feodorov, a farmer's son, is assigned to the third company of a rifle regiment in a mechanized division stationed at Halle, Germany. He does not know the number of his regiment or of his division, nor has he tried to find out. During training, he was cautioned against curiosity about such matters.

Private Feodorov is twenty-two years old. He has been stationed at Halle for slightly over a year. A full half of that time he has been on maneuvers and field exercises, sometimes near by, sometimes halfway across the Soviet zone of Germany. For him these have mostly been periods of waiting very quietly in pine forests, often in the rain or snow. On two occasions he has advanced behind live shellfire, with the bullets of his own battalion's heavy machine guns overhead. But he remembers the maneuvers chiefly in terms of tedium, hunger, discomfort, and the ranting of Sergeant Kalugin, one of the six professional soldiers in his platoon. "You shouldn't complain," said the sergeant. "You should have seen the war. When you went into a front-line outfit then, you knew you were in until either you or the whole German Army got it. It was always wet and food never came. You've seen nothing yet."

Back in Halle, Private Feodorov is fairly well off physically, better really than he was at home. He lives in a vast ex-*Wehrmacht* barracks, drafty from a thousand broken windowpanes, but the food is substantial, and he has two complete, serviceable uniforms and a good pair of shoes. Once a week he bathes. Life would be all right, if there were not always such Argus-eyed observation over Private Feodorov and his fellows. He knows that his corporal, his sergeant, and his officers are supposed to report any disloyalty, or anything that looks the least like disloyalty, on his part. That does not scare him. But he also knows that there are others in his company who have the same assignment as their principal duty. Who they are he does not know.

Halle was hardly damaged in the war. Nearly all the substantial houses still stand, and the streets are full of German girls who, even now, manage to deck themselves out in brighter clothes than Private Feodorov has ever seen around home. Private Feodorov has never spoken to any of these girls; he never has entered any private houses, big or little. From innumerable lectures at the company's semiweekly political-education meetings he has gathered that all Germans were Nazis and that fraternization is wrong, but also that most Germans are "democrats" at heart and have within them the seeds of redemption. Private Feodorov keeps away from Germans.

In addition to the normal losses brought on by demobilization and reassignments, four men have left the third company in the past year without any explanation of their disappearance. Perhaps they deserted. Perhaps they were suspected of intended desertion or other disloyalty. Private Feodorov does not know. On the other hand, moronic Private Simonov was loudly accused of intent to desert and was led away with great ostentation. Private Feodorov sometimes wonders if Private Simonov, whom no one will regret and who was too doltish even to think of running away, was not deliberately chosen to show at minimum cost the penalties of heterodoxy.

In the third company there is a Private Antonev, from near Stalingrad, who had been a member of Private Feodorov's own conscription group. The other day, as they lounged in the barrack square, Feodorov ventured:

"Of course, Mitya, like you I feel highly privileged to serve in the Soviet Army. But I must say I'm looking forward to getting out next year."

"I can understand that, Vanya, but what are your reasons?"

"Well, frankly, I get very lonesome far from home. You know how it is: everything regulated, no close friends or relatives, and a sense of constant—oh, necessary, of course—surveillance."

"I know, Vanya. You aren't alone in that. Why, in the cities they even have a slang phrase for it. They call it the Gray Life."

"That's it. Well, that's why I want to go home."

"But won't you find the Gray Life at home, too?"

"Frankly, yes. But you know in the old days the *muzik* used to get a little satisfaction out of shouting all sorts of things at the rear end of his horse when he ploughed far out in the fields. I'll be on a tractor come next year. I can shout at *it*."

—Col. Atkins

Down on the Kolkhoz

Misha, a collective farmer of the Red Dawn *kolkhoz* in the upper Volga Valley, hates to get up early on a hundred mornings in the year—not because he is lazy, but because those are the days he works in the collective fields. On other mornings he arises willingly at dawn because he can devote himself

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to the half-acre private garden allowed him by the collective.

Doing collective work goes against Misha's repressed but stubborn desire to possess his own land. He feels that work for the state pays him little: Each year, the government takes forty per cent of the crops as "compulsory deliveries"—payment for work done by state tractor stations and return on state seed loans.

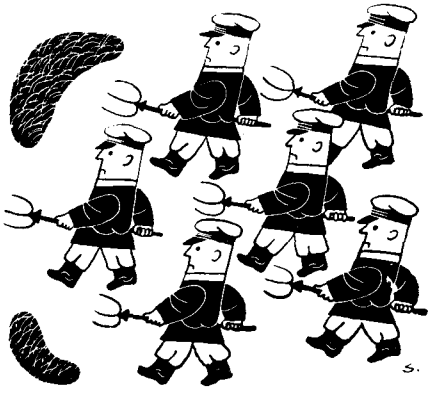
Thirty-five per cent more goes into the collective's seed-and-forage reserves. In a good year, Misha and the other collective farmers receive the remaining twenty-five per cent of the crop to feed their families and their own livestock. Should the harvest be bad, the government's share amounts to more than the usual two-fifths, because its compulsory deliveries are calculated on the collective farm's total arable land, *not* on the actual harvest. The seed-and-forage reserves must be set aside regardless of harvest conditions. Misha and his co-workers get what is left, which even in a good year is barely enough.

The Soviet government is aware that Misha, and many of the other forty-one million collective farmers in the U.S.S.R. entertain certain "unsocialistic" ideas, and it decreed a long time ago that *kolkhozniks* must work a hundred or more days a year on the communal fields. On those days, Misha barely gets a chance, before he goes out to the *kolkhoz,* to feed his livestock—one cow, one pig, and several goats and chickens. This done, he and his wife start off together for the fields. Their baby is left in the care of Misha's mother-in-law, who has climbed down from her hard, but warm, bed—a huge wood stove with a sheepskin coat thrown over it. Besides the baby, Misha has a fourteen-year-old son, but a Labor Reserve school in the city has conscripted him for training in skilled industrial work.

Misha's village is not a showplace. There is but one street—a crooked, rutted dirt road, inches deep in dust during the summer, and a trough of mud during the spring and fall. On both sides of it are the log cabins of the collective farmers, some fifteen in all. There are no Iowa-type barns; back of the cabins are large low sheds, for livestock and vegetables, and a few small structures that resemble doghouses and are actually baths where the villagers steam themselves by pouring water over piles of heated stones. The hamlet is too tiny to have a school, a hospital, or even one of the rural cooperative stores. But there is a library in the cabin once owned by a *kulak* and now used as a combined cultural and administrative center. Here one finds Soviet propaganda slogans on bright red banners tacked to the walls. Their juxtaposition is often pretty haphazard: LONG LIVE THE U.S.S.R. COMMUNIST PARTY OF BOLSHEVIKS!, and directly underneath: COMRADES! DON'T SPIT ON THE FLOOR. USE THE SPITTOON!

When Misha and his wife reach the *kolkhoz* fields, they separate to work in their respective brigades. He is in a grain brigade, she in a livestock group. Both are closely watched by their brigade leaders, who must keep records of all communal work done by the collective farmers, since *kolkhoz* earnings are distributed almost entirely on the basis of piecework. These brigade leaders are usually not Communists; there are only a few party members in the villages. The leaders are ordinary farmers with good loyalty records. The *kolkhoz* manager, however, is a dues-paying Communist, brought in from outside and interested in pleasing the government rather than the *kolkhozniks.*

The collective farm itself is of average size—about four thousand acres. Only thirteen hundred are under cultivation at any time. The remaining land consists of plowed fallow pastures, and of meadows, swamps, and woods. As in most of 240,000 *kolkhozes* in the U.S.S.R., grain and potatoes are the main products. In the upper Volga Valley, cattle, hogs, and chickens also are plentiful. Flax, hemp, and sunflowers are widely grown, too. About eighty families work on Misha's collective farm, which includes another and larger village besides his own.



After the day's collective work, Misha and his wife walk slowly home, across the boundary between the collective fields and the *kolkhozniks'* private acreage. The distinction between them is only too apparent: the brown, sparse *kolkhoz* crops contrast with the fresh greenery of the private gardens. Misha devotes most of his time to his plot, which is his main source of cash. When the communal earnings of the collective farmers are distributed by piecework reckoning, Misha's family is paid mostly in kind, and receives about a thousand rubles in cash. But by selling vegetables from his garden to the inhabitants of a nearby small city, Misha earns over a thousand additional rubles a year. No middleman is allowed in this transaction. Misha's wife borrows a *kolkhoz* horse and drives into the city, or sometimes walks the whole fifteen miles. She brings the garden produce to the legal black market in the city, where she sells at any price the traffic will bear. With this money, she buys necessities impossible to obtain in the village: kerosene, matches, salt, sugar, and tea. Occasionally she purchases white bread, as a pleasant substitute for the black loaves she bakes at home. Very infrequently she may buy an article of clothing—which is still expensive in spite of the price reform in March. At that time prices were lowered ten to thirty per cent on many luxury items, which Misha's wife cannot afford; the shoes and cotton clothes she needs remain dear.

In the evenings, Misha's family and friends usually find time for some recreation. Someone may bring out his accordion and the neighbors gather at one of the houses to dance folk quadrilles. A spontaneous chorus often forms to shout the fast, repetitious limericks of folk music. These activities are usually accompanied by the chewing and spitting out of large numbers of sunflower seeds—the Russian equivalent of peanuts and popcorn.

On less lively evenings, Misha's family may sit at home in the light of their kerosene lamps, and listen to the radio. The village still has no electric lights, but radio loudspeakers are installed in almost every hut. A central receiver, operated by a trusted government em-

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ployee, tunes in the program. The villagers have the choice of turning their individual loudspeakers on or off.

Twelve Hundred Rubles

Andrei and his wife Natasha, industrial workers in the large factory city of Gorki, never seem to have enough money. Although both are working, they often have to borrow from their friends, who must be repaid from every two weeks' wages. By Soviet standards, Andrei and Natasha earn decent salaries. He receives five hundred rubles a month—an average sum for a factory worker—while she is a Stakhanovite, and gets seven hundred.

They feel eternally poor because of the high cost of living. In the way of clothing, their monthly twelve hundred rubles is enough to buy one suit or three pairs of shoes. As for food, the twelve hundred will purchase thirty-six pounds of coffee, seventeen pounds of tea, or sixty pounds of meat. But Andrei and Natasha must feed and clothe themselves and their two children. Each member of the family has one good suit or dress, one pair of shoes, one pair of galoshes, and one heavy overcoat, which is worn in winter, spring, and fall. Their meals are usually monotonous—vegetable soup, potatoes, and black bread, with milk only for the children. Immediately after payday, there is a little meat.

The one expense that is at a minimum is the rent, which amounts to less than 120 of Andrei's and Natasha's twelve hundred rubles. But their quarters are far from spacious, and probably worth no more than they pay. Like most of the other thirty-four million workers in the U.S.S.R., Andrei and Natasha (and their children) live in one room. They consider themselves lucky, because next door in the same building seven people share a similar space. The subdivided apartment they live in has three such "family-rooms." A total of fifteen infants and adults all share one kitchen and toilet. There is no bathtub or shower, so Andrei and his family take their towels one a week and go to the public steam bath.

Andrei and Natasha work at the same factory, a small plant manufacturing auto parts for the giant Molotov auto-assembly establishment at the edge of the city. One of their children is old enough to go to school while they work, but the other, being only three, must be taken to the factory to spend the day in its nursery. Traveling the two miles from home to the plant is a problem, especially with a small child; the busses and trolleys are scarce and overcrowded. Alone, Andrei or Natasha could hang onto the sides of a streetcar, or onto the shoulders of another person clinging to the trolley door. But a three-year-old child cannot perform such feats, so the family often walks the two miles regardless of weather.

This means early rising on the six workdays a week, because Andrei and Natasha cannot afford to be late at the factory. Arriving more than twenty minutes late is considered the same as an unauthorized absence, punished by law with a twenty-five-per cent pay cut for six months. Like all Soviet workers, they both have workbooks, which record their complete labor record—good and bad—since the start of their first jobs. The factory management keeps these booklets, which Andrei and Natasha would have to show in applying for new positions at another firm. By simply refusing to return the workbooks, the auto-parts factory can hold them in their jobs.

Andrei and Natasha would like to transfer to the big Molotov plant in

Gorki, which pays better wages, but their factory will not let two such skilled people go. At the same time, they fear being transferred to some remote Siberian city, because by law the Auto-Tractor Ministry, which controls their factory, can send any skilled auto worker wherever he is needed. In such forced transfers, the government pays moving expenses, but Andrei and Natasha are fond of Gorki.

Another thorn is the state-controlled labor union. Andrei and Natasha, like ninety per cent of all Soviet workers, joined a union—because it was the best thing to do. The labor-union officials handle all social-insurance work for the government, and it is wise to be a member of the organization that insures you.

Though Andrei knows that most Soviet factories pay according to piecework, he dislikes the government's practice of continually raising the average production quotas so that they equal each new Stakhanovite record. He is an ordinary worker, and finds it hard to catch up with the ever-rising norms. Natasha, on the other hand, is a Stakhanovite record-breaker, and enjoys the extra pay for producing above plan, even if she has to work very hard.

Even Natasha is not very productive by American standards: Most Stakhanovite records are surpassed daily by American laborers. Techniques of production are still far more advanced in the United States.

Andrei and Natasha are not able to talk as freely as the collective farmers, but they live somewhat better and seem to have higher morale. Unlike the Russian peasant, the city worker has little nostalgia for private ownership, and would just as soon work in a state factory as in one of the few former private plants. Both the *kolkhoznik* and the urban laborer are poorly housed, drably dressed, and monotonously fed. But the city man often has more to eat than the farmer, has first choice of the few goods put on sale in the city stores, and enjoys theaters, movies, and parks the *kolkhoznik* may never see.

—Ellsworth Raymond

"The lowest Soviet citizen free from the chains of capitalism stands a head taller than any foreign high-placed bigwig, bearing on his shoulders the yoke of capitalist slavery."
Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma*
Moscow, 1945, p. 590

"By pursuing his own interest [the business man] frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it." Adam Smith, 1776

"Serving his own interest, the *kolkhoz* member will do better work in the *kolkhoz* and thus strengthen the *kolkhoz* economy."
Kruschov, new Prime Minister of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1941.

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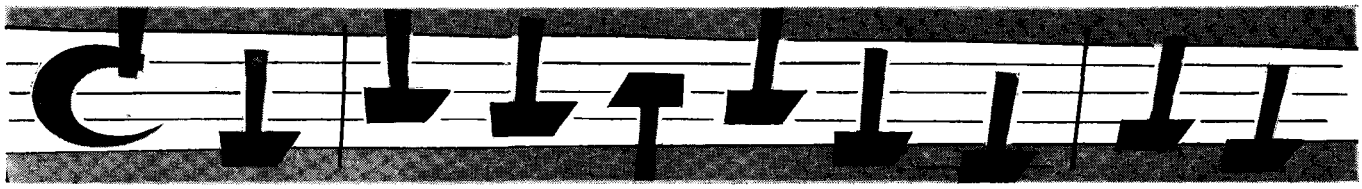
Ordeal of a 'Cosmopolitan' Composer

Sergei Prokofieff who not long ago was the pride of Soviet music is being hounded into silence by the new line of the party critics



Sergei Sergeievich Prokofieff, selections from whose extensive compositions are played almost daily on concert programs in this country, is considered by a good number of Americans to be the most important composer, and probably the most important artist in any field, in the Soviet Union. Even the majority of American children know his work, if only through the medium of a Walt Disney cartoon. Until 1945, his standing in Russia was similarly unassailable. Since then, his western popularity has become more and more of a liability at home.

In three years, almost nothing new by Prokofieff has been heard in America. One reason is that he has been, off and on, quite seriously ill, but this doesn't explain his almost total eclipse. The press has contained increasingly ominous reports about his position in the precarious hierarchy of Soviet Men of Distinction. From the time of the great musical purge, which began in February, 1948, his work has been described as "formalist," "decadent-bourgeois," and, lately, "rootless-cosmopolitan" more consistently than that of any other Soviet composer. Shostakovitch, Khatchaturian, and others of the younger musical generation have usually been reprieved for such misdemeanors after six months or a year of penance. Having been thrown into the hamper, they have been washed, dried, ironed, and bundled off to some peace congress or music festival.

Not so with Prokofieff. The ban on most of his works has been tightened. He has been represented as a man whose close association with the bourgeois world has so profoundly corrupted his creative make-up that, to quote one of his recent critics in the official Soviet music magazine *Sovetskaya Muzyka,* "it is highly doubtful that we will ever see a work by Prokofieff free from formalistic deviations." His two latest operas, *War and Peace* and *The Tale of a Real Man,* have been vilified so ferociously that it has seemed, at times, as if his official critics would soon have to enlarge the already vast vocabulary of Soviet aesthetic abuse.

The case of Prokofieff, one of the older generation of Russian intellectuals, gives striking evidence of the Procrustean treatment that is apparently the standard fate of any Soviet artist suspected of exposure to the virus of western influence.

Prokofieff left Russia in 1918, after the October Revolution. He was one of the first to obtain a Soviet passport, departing from Russia legally and not as an *émigré*. He first went to America, via Japan, for a tour of piano concerts. After a stay here of over a year he went to Paris and decided to settle there, as did many Russian intellectuals of all political camps—and there were quite a few. In Paris his fame as a composer was growing rapidly and his music began to be performed all over the western world.

During the early 1920's he went on repeated and lucrative concert tours of North and South America and non-Soviet Europe, and almost everywhere he was acclaimed as one of the most outstanding modern composers and performers. In America he had met Lina Llubera, an attractive young singer of Spanish extraction and Russian background, whom he married and who became his close collaborator. Until the early 1930's they frequently went on tour together, Mme. Prokofieff singing her husband's songs to his accompaniment.

In 1924 France recognized the Soviet Union, and one of the first visitors to the newly established Soviet Embassy on the Rue de Grenelle was Sergei Prokofieff. Like most other Russians abroad he had become a "stateless person" and had taken out the Nansen passport carried by most refugees. Now he dug out his old Soviet passport and began proceedings for reinstatement as a Soviet citizen. Meanwhile, at the invitation of the Soviet Association of Proletarian Musicians, he went on his first extensive tour of the Soviet Union. There he was triumphantly received, as a famous Russian composer sympathetic to the régime and as one who had rejected the ideological position of an *émigré*. In 1927, he was granted citizenship.

What prompted Prokofieff to return to the Soviet Union? First of all, he probably felt that he could do his best and happiest work among his countrymen. But, in addition, his attitude toward his country's government was undoubtedly warm. The U.S.S.R. of that period was not the same state it is

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today, and the feelings of a perceptive Russian intellectual toward his motherland and its government were probably quite different then from what they would be now. In the mid-1920's, the Soviet Union was going through the NEP phase, which to many, both outside and inside, appeared as a rejection of the bloody regimen of the Red Terror and the civil war. A few Soviet citizens were for the first time not only allowed to travel, but even to reside in foreign countries. The demarcation line between the pro-Communist and the anti-Communist Russians abroad was not as clearly drawn at that time as it later became. Prokofieff, although not a Communist (he has never, so far as is known, been a party member), was sympathetic to the Soviet régime, regarded it as the legitimate government of his country, and, like others, excused its extremist policies as caused by historical necessity.

By origin and upbringing Prokofieff belonged to the pre-revolutionary Russian middle class rather than to the intelligentsia. His manners and his thinking betray the rough straightforwardness, and at times even boorishness, which are typical of many representatives of his class. He is a jovial, matter-of-fact man, an optimist and a realist. His personality is much like that of certain new Russian types, the Soviet engineer or the Soviet general. Hard-boiled and hard-working, precise and exacting, he is totally free from traditional nineteenth-century Russian soul-searching. Even his humor and his wit are harsh: He likes crude jokes and tells mercilessly sarcastic stories. Yet he can also be warm and friendly, in a shy and childlike way, with a kind of uncouth tenderness which is ingratiating because of its spontaneity.

Prokofieff accepted the revolution in its "totality," and saw in the new Russia the logical consequence of the old one, the result of a century-long process of emancipation. He was, and surely still is, a sincere and *instinctive* Russian patriot, who gives little thought to the question of justice or injustice in the Soviet government.

In 1927, after his return to Paris from his first tour in the U.S.S.R., Prokofieff's ballet *The Steel Age* was produced. It was a panorama of Soviet life during the NEP, and it was adorned by moments of satire and ended in a grandiose scene depicting the construction of the New Russia. He wrote this heroic ballet in the peaceful bourgeois setting of a villa in the Savoie mountains. The work was produced by the Ballet Russe of that same Sergei Diaghileff who has become the arch-villain and arch-corrupter of Russian art, and prototype of the "pernicious, degenerate, and rootless cosmopolitan." *The Steel Age* was the first Soviet "epic" to appear abroad, and had a tremendous success among European intellectuals who were hungry for news about the socialist experiment.

From that time on, Prokofieff became a kind of representative of Soviet culture abroad; he was regarded as its best protagonist and its most useful propagandist. While the political and cultural barriers around Russia were becoming more and more apparent, Prokofieff's personal position as the unofficial ambassador of Soviet music abroad remained unchanged. He continued to reside mostly in Paris, to go to Russia yearly for three or four months, and to make extensive concert tours all over the world.

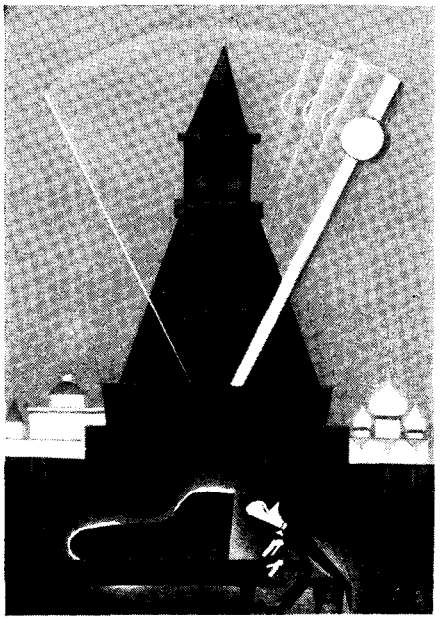
When the Kremlin announced the drive *against* "formalist experimentation," leading to the first music purge in 1932 and stressing a music "which would be acceptable and understandable to the broad proletarian masses of the Soviet Union," Prokofieff welcomed the official edict as a realization of some of his own ideas. "I always wanted to invent melodies," he often remarked, "which could be understood by large masses of people—simple, singable melodies." This he considered to be the most important and difficult task of a modern composer. As late as the middle 1930's, he did not see any *ideological* contradiction between the aesthetic policy of the Soviet government and his own artistic philosophy.

But it was really during that period that the separation of the two worlds became apparent. In the years 1932 to 1935 Stalin had stifled nearly all the dissenting groups inside Russia, and had developed his police network across the land. The "total state" became a pragmatic reality, and the last vestiges of individual thought and independent cultural activity were being eradicated.

Prokofieff began to grow somewhat morose. At times there appeared in his manner when abroad slight traces of worry. Nevertheless his position seemed to be well entrenched at home, and he still had there protection in the highest circles. Toward the middle of the 1930's Prokofieff and his family moved completely to Russia. Whether he was mildly "advised" or positively ordered to do so is a matter of conjecture. The fact is that he was obviously executing some kind of a mandate, and that he did so without much enthusiasm.

All through these years he tried to conform with all aesthetic and ideological wishes of the party and the government. Thus, when it was suggested that he write a piece for the sixtieth birthday of Josef Stalin, he produced a *Toast Song to Stalin*. He was unable to find a text in the works of Lenin that would be suitable, since there are only two references to Stalin, both slighting, in Lenin's voluminous writings. Lenin had to be abandoned as a source of inspiration, and Prokofieff was compelled to use the innocuous body of a drinking song.

Has Prokofieff's music shown traces of the deterioration one could attribute to his having had to conform to the dictates of the party? On the whole his music has undergone a process of great, and at times excessive, simplification. Some of his melodies have become obvious to the point of being trivial, and in his harmonic language he has occasionally used defunct Victorian devices. How much of this is the result of conformism and how much the natural development of his art is



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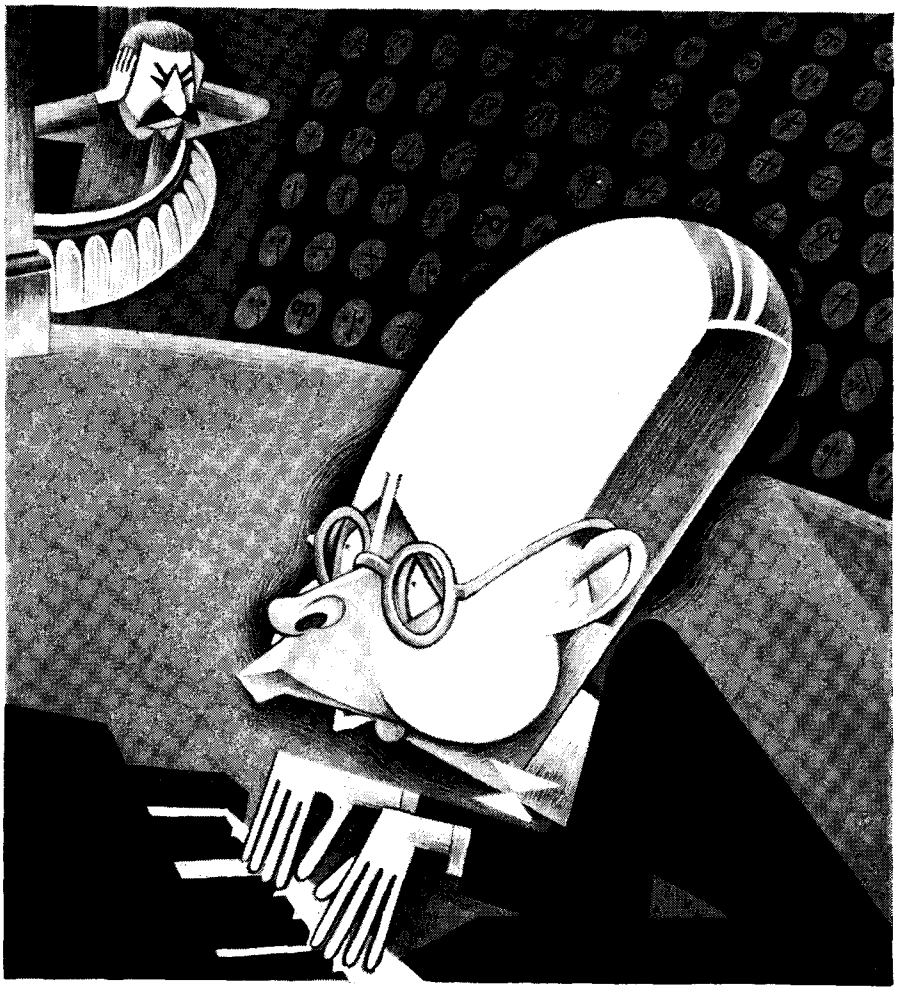
hard to determine. It is certain, however, that throughout the 1930's and the early 1940's he was one of the few Soviet composers whose music still preserved a genuine freshness, and didn't emanate the synthetic odor (like that of *ersatz* gasoline) and the dull provincialism which are the trademarks of most contemporary party-approved Soviet music.

Until 1938, Prokofieff continued to make yearly trips abroad, but behind his mask of official optimism, one could detect a feeling of profound and terrible insecurity. During the purge of 1936, when the second big attack against formalism in music was launched and Shostakovitch was put on ice for nearly five years, his tension mounted. It is believed that at that time Stalin personally intervened in Prokofieff's behalf, and he was taken off the list of purgees. He now began to be worried about his art. He had thought that he was conforming well, and that his personal inclinations coincided with what he understood to be the wishes of the governmental arbiters of culture.

Prokofieff continued to put up a front, but he stopped urging some of his non-Soviet Russian friends to go back to the Soviet Union. His relations with his wife began to deteriorate, and in the early 1940's he left her and his two children, and went to the Caucasus with a young niece of Kaganovich, Stalin's close friend and associate, herself a leader of the Soviet youth organization, the Young Pioneers. After the war started, Prokofieff, like many other Russian artists, participated in various morale-building enterprises. His position seemed secure and his reputation soared above his rivals'. He was the dean of Soviet composers.

Late in 1943 or early in 1944, news came of a sudden heart illness, and Prokofieff was unable to work for many months. Meanwhile the voluminous score of his opera *War and Peace* had been completed, but despite his wife's collaboration as librettist, and a lavish production in Leningrad in 1945, the work was a failure. In 1946, after another heart attack, he completed the score of his Sixth Symphony. It had a successful first performance in Leningrad, but a much cooler reception in Moscow.

During a third heart attack, early in February, 1948, the ax fell. That was



the day *Pravda* published that unique document in the annals of music, the point-by-point condemnation of the most prominent Soviet composers by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. Prokofieff, as the pre-eminent composer, led the list.

The ritual of all Soviet purges was followed with scrupulous precision. Public meetings of Soviet composers were held all over the Soviet Union. All of the ones who had strayed recanted their errors and their ideological sins. Prokofieff wrote a letter of apology. His terms were slightly more dignified than those used by other purgees. He regretted his obvious errors but indulged in a long explanation of how difficult it was to invent good melodies. The letter was found inadequate, and the next step in the ritual was the work of penance. Prokofieff chose a stilted patriotic short story about a hero of the Soviet Air Force who had lost his feet during the war. His wife concocted a libretto, and Prokofieff wrote, in record time, a full-length opera, called *The Tale of a Real Man*. After the first tentative reading of the piece by a group of singers and a Leningrad orchestra, it was thrown out as an "unpardonable distortion of Soviet reality" and a "base mixture of formalistic habits." Both Prokofieff and the two conductors of the orchestra were reprimanded for having taken the orchestra's time to rehearse such abominable music. Prokofieff was kept busy writing apologetic letters.

Again rumors of Prokofieff's ill health began to be heard. The Soviet press and some of his colleagues continued to attack him and his art with unrelenting ferocity.

Whether Prokofieff can achieve full redemption and again take up his position as the leading Soviet composer is doubtful. In the eyes of those who rule the Russian people, he is a symbol of Russia's former association with the modern western world, an association the Kremlin now rejects, except when it has a claque as loud as the one at the Waldorf. —NICOLAS NABOKOV

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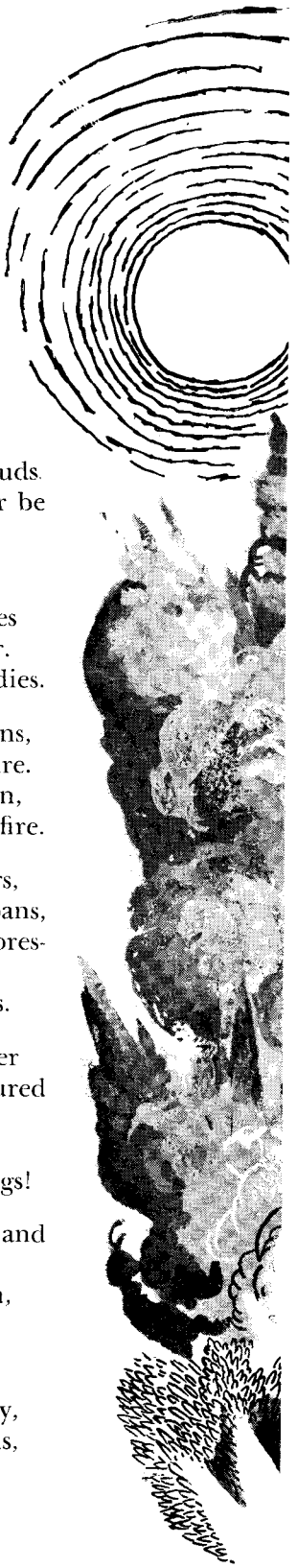
To Man's Measure . . .



Makers of Highways

With these excerpts from his poem Makers of Highways, *Nikolay Zabolotzky is introduced to the American reader for the first time. The scene is laid in Siberia, and the men engaged in cutting a highway through the wilderness are not there of their own accord but because the government has condemned them to hard labor and has sent them there. As a result of the great purge of 1936-1938, Zabolotzky was with them for ten years. We are interested in his poem because the fact that it was written shows man's extraordinary resilience. All poetry, and Russian poetry in particular, loses a great deal in translation but we feel that these stanzas are revealing. The translator is Robert Magidoff.*

I.

The horn lifts up its droning, humming sounds,
So joyfully familiar to my heart,
And while the sleepy sun takes time to waken,
Our TNT prepares to play its part.

Over the cliffs, precipitous and ancient,
Resounds the crackle of the Bickford fuse.
Then the explosion thunders, birch trees shudder,
Earth's rocky bowels groan and hell breaks loose.

Under the force of atmospheric pressures,
The blasted rocks spit out a brief white flame,
And howl, and sing, and chase it to the clouds.
The quarry, filled with smoke, will never be the same.

Awakened by the even roar of landslides,
In ancient woods all nature groans and cries
All nature, shaken, moans its mortal terror.
The moan grows weak, and weaker till it dies.

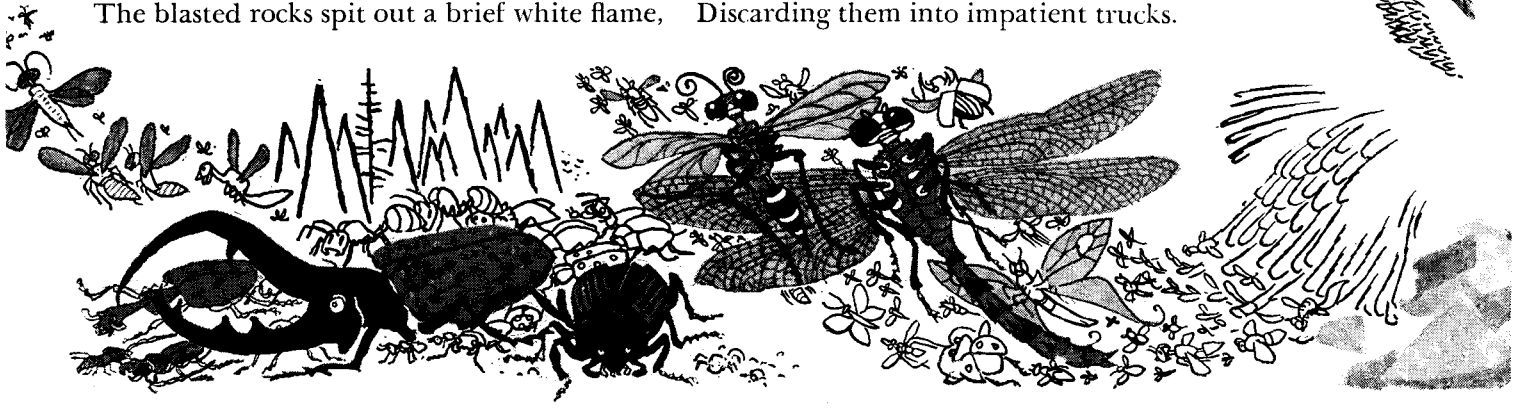
The horn is singing over distant mountains,
The sun is crawling out of sleep's deep mire.
With crowbars raised, ranks madly broken,
We run to cut the path of thunder and of fire.

Then sunlight banishes all fears and terrors,
All ghosts and shadows disappear with groans,
And there in dust lies bared and phosphorescent
The subterranean world of glowing stones.

With every moment blacker grow and fairer
Their moist, deformed, their sadly tortured rings.
O, stones—gigantic bowls split open!
O, stars in segments—nursing broken wings!

Rectangles, cubes, and slabs, and squares and circles,
And thunders hardened into silences again,
You lie before me helpless, rent asunder
By one slight effort of man's lucid brain.

The age-old coolness lingers in the quarry,
The dust smoke hovers over tortured rocks,
But excavators are already busy
Discarding them into impatient trucks.



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II.

The jealous North was frowning in resentment,
But, growing swifter with each day and breeze,
On towards the icepacks of the Straits of Bering
Came racing currents of the tropic seas.

To ceaseless blasts of TNT explosions,
Lit up bewitchingly by rays of spring,
A butterfly, enormous as a rocket,
Soared on the full expanse of dazzling wings.

Imperious and pompous, the impostor,
The self-styled luminary, swam and soared,
While hosts of tiny creatures trailed behind it,
Each shining body like a winged sword.

The grasshopper, charged by the warmth of sunshine,
Kept rattling off the seconds like a clock.
The heavy beetle, leaping into sideslips,
Dragged its mustachios over grass and rock.

A million living creatures singing, chirping,
Their sounds blending in one steady choir,
Were crawling, flying, crowding, eating, drinking,
Kept back from you by smoke alone and fire.

Beyond, the multitudes of singing insects,
Defying swamps and moss, their evil ban,
Surged to the tops of heat-cracked hills, and mountains,
A world of flowers yet unknown to man.

Competing with the blaze of dawns and sunsets,
Right here, among abyss and swamp and crest,
It seemed that nature had unleashed at heaven
The fury of all colors it possessed.

Above the mad confusions of the foliage,
Above delirious riots of the green,
Here blossomed forth the very soul of plant life
In giving birth to flowers yet unseen.

When over mountains shimmer constellations,
And in the distance hover songs of spheres,
The tender sound of sleepy bells responding
Swims upward from the earth, and drifts, and veers.

The flower choir cannot be heard by mankind.
The voice of tulips, lilies is so slight
That maybe only butterflies and beetles
Can hear its fragrant magic in the night.

On such a night the mountains all are singing,
Each crag and gorge is bursting with a song,
All living things are shaken by the music
As it erupts and storms and sweeps along.

Until it drops to rest in caves primeval,
Repeating sleepily through time's vast span
The sound of melodies which ever rarer
Brings back to memory inconstant man.

III.

The horn droned on amid the rage of mountains,
Along the river, railway whistles swirled.
A likeness of cyclopean transformation
Has overwhelmed the ancient *taiga* world.

Here, in the temple of primeval nature,
Through thickets, woods resisting night and day,
Collapsing in the swamps, in waters sinking,
And losing hold of cliffs, we carved our way.

The winds of Amgun and Amur harrassed us,
Moose crossed our path, wolves hunted us by night,
But all that hitherto lay buried
We struck, we reached, and proudly brought to light.

The waves of Okhotsk Sea welled out to meet us,
And frightened birds took wing from cool green blades,
At highway's edge, we stood erect, triumphant,
Pointing at the sky our blazing spades.

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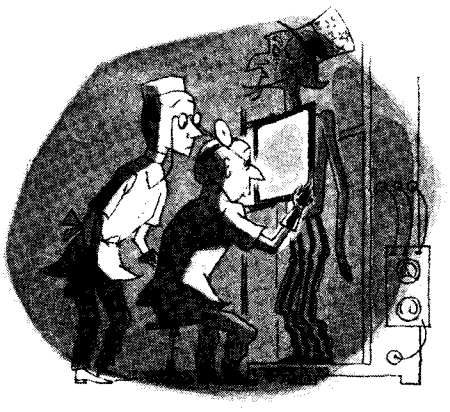
The Best from Both Sides

An economist says that our output might keep growing without slumps if we hold up purchasing power but do not tax business into inactivity



A policy that is half right may lead to results that are wholly wrong. The most unnerving element in our economic life today is the contradiction between our desire for an existence as safe and tranquil as a monk's and our craving, natural to an industrial people, for constantly rising living standards. A world of secure poverty would not be hard to achieve. Nor would a world of insecure growth. But can we combine *enough* growth with *enough* security? That is not so simple. The question of how to keep up industrial growth is crucial in modern economic policy. The threat of depression comes from excessively rapid growth, but if we give up trying to increase output, we may succeed only in rationing out a meager subsistence, in spite of the most elaborate full-employment and stabilization policies in the world.

To many people the notion that depressions may result from too rapid economic growth will seem plain nonsense. They will retort that depressions obviously come from lack of planning, and that is all there is to it. But the problem cannot really be defined quite so facilely.

If we take as our starting point the idea that the consumer should get *what* he wants *when* he wants it (and nearly all liberal socialists as well as capitalists accept this principle in some degree), we run immediately into one of the basic paradoxes and conflicts of our day. The notion is widespread that during a boom or a depression all businesses are about equally prosperous or equally depressed. Unfortunately, the curves are not nearly so symmetrical. When output rises and people feel better off, they change the whole pattern of their spending. They buy more meat, milk, and electricity. They buy less bread and fewer oil lamps. Some businesses may even be ruined if the country enjoys too much prosperity.

Moreover, shifts in buying are not always very easy to predict, as in the case of oil and meat. There is a tremendous amount of unpredictable change. This makes for two great dangers. In the first place, we can never be sure that after a series of fluctuations in industry we will still have full employment. More businesses may go broke than are being started, and if expansion does not get under way elsewhere, a general depression may result. And even if all changes are anticipated, and there is no depression, a great deal of insecurity may be involved for *particular* people.

The trouble is that when buyers change the way they spend their money, there is bound to be a change in the kind of labor and skills that are needed. Previous job-security in a factory, a union, or a whole industry may suddenly be upset. Add the effect of new inventions to these problems of simple growth, and it is easy to see how much insecurity is involved in economic development. Even in Russia the commissar of rail transport would find himself becoming less powerful if people began to prefer traveling by bus and plane. Reorganizing skills means reorganizing work teams, which means, in turn, displacement of certain workers and changes in the prestige and perquisites of many of the rest. Though a displaced man may get another job if there is reasonably full employment, it will very likely be less satisfactory than the old one if his skills are no longer much in demand.

Depressions may, of course, start almost anywhere in the economy, but usually they are concentrated in the equipment, or investment-goods, industries, such as steel, tools, and building materials. In industries like these we run into the "backlog" problem, which is at once one of the most important and one of the least understood in modern industrial society.

Suppose a new kind of house is invented and everyone wants it at once, or suppose that construction has been interrupted—by a war, say—for a number of years. Suppose, too, that one hundred thousand new houses, requiring a thousand plants to make them, are needed to satisfy an accumulated backlog of demand. To build all the new houses right away, we would have to put up many new steel and other construction-materials plants. As soon as the backlog had been satisfied, the new plants might find themselves forced to cut down employment because their markets were reduced. If, on the other hand, we built only a few houses at a time, in order to keep the heavy goods industry stable and jobs in it secure, veterans would go for years without the necessary houses. Thus there can be, at times, an almost insoluble conflict between satisfying demand and maintaining stability. The building trades know this as well as the construction industry, and tend to favor

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stability over high output. The public attitude on this point is "heads I win, tails you lose." If we do not go ahead and build all the houses and all the steel plants *right away*, there will begin to be talk about sabotage and capitalistic greed. If, on the other hand, we *do* make some effort to satisfy the backlog promptly and give the public durable goods in a hurry, everybody will cry out, when a saturation point comes, that if only we had had planning there would have been no depression.

We are left with the conclusion that if we go in for rapid, unrationed growth we cannot avoid upsetting changes and a degree of insecurity. Does this mean that we have simply got to get used to the prospect of depression and insecurity? Some stern conservatives may think so. But Americans will not submit today to a concept of freedom that protects the poor merely in their right to beg in the street. There are three main ways of trying to stabilize growth: advance planning, redistribution of income, and what might be called, for lack of another name, "filling in."

Many businessmen, as well as government and labor planners, will argue in favor of prolonged rationing, enforced scarcity, and a general planned slowdown, for security's sake. The only difference among these groups is that each would like to do the planning itself.

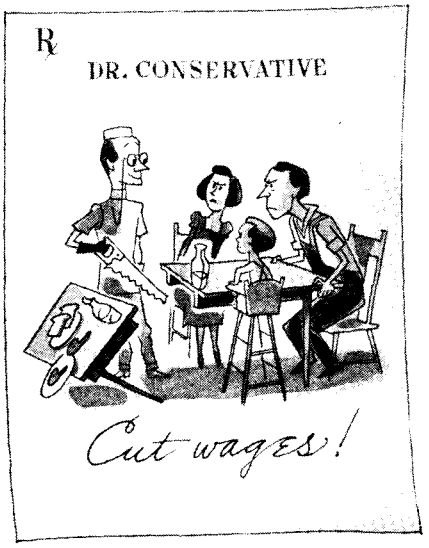
It is extraordinarily optimistic to assume that advance planning, no matter by whom, can be combined with *continued* growth over the long pull. We may begin by saying "slow down *for orderly growth*," but soon the slogan will only be "slow down." There are reasons to be dubious about a general planned growth, whether the planner is Benjamin Fairless, Leon Keyserling, or John L. Lewis. The trouble is that individual industrial groups — whether they are businessmen, bureaucrats, or unions—almost always underestimate demand. Backlogs are not purely mechanical things. If every vested interest, in management and labor, starts to hold back production in order to maintain *its* particular prices and gains, we are likely to find ourselves cutting one another's throats. It is true that a general expansion does not always proceed smoothly. But it is equally true that if everyone is too scared to take a chance in *his* line, we may all find ourselves poor.

By ruling out planned expansion we are left with the policy of "maintaining purchasing power." This soon splits in two. Some will want to increase the total of purchasing power, while others will want merely to shift existing money around through taxation and wage increases.

Undoubtedly, once a serious industrial decline gets under way some money starts to accumulate which otherwise would have been spent. This gives a certain plausibility to demands for drastic redistribution. But, before we accept such a point of view, there are things to remember.

First of all, our problem is always one of food, clothing, and shelter, not just one of money. Even the present output of the United States is not sufficient to give everyone what most of us have come to regard as the essentials of a decent livelihood—no matter how evenly that output may be distributed.

If we want more growth, and if the wheels of industry are to be kept turning, we must remember we cannot have growth without continued investment; and continued investment, private or government, if it is not to cause inflation, demands continued saving. If a redistributing program cripples the long-run motive for saving, then the next



boom is likely to be highly inflationary. In other words, a sound economic policy cannot merely be improvised with reference to the demands of the moment. We have got to look ahead and see what is coming. If the habit of saving is *on the average* a useful one, then we would be very foolish to get rid of it for the sake of a short-run emergency—even supposing (which I doubt) that such a policy would do any good.

One of the most prevalent ideas is the notion that if only *existing* plants are kept busy all will be well. This is quite wrong. To maintain full employment the investment-goods industries need to be *constantly* and *steadily* employed. And this means constant, steady *growth* and change. Mere replacement takes up about half of investment-goods output. Our society (and *any* growing society, capitalist or socialist) is so organized that if it tries to stand still it immediately runs backward. It must *grow* to stand still. It must change to remain the same. Even if every retail store this year is selling as much as it sold last year we have no guarantee that a depression is not in the offing. *Growth* is needed for full employment.

Growth, however, not only involves special problems; it also requires incentives. During the last fifteen years a lot of ridicule (and much of it justified) has been heaped on those super-orthodox economists who said "supply always creates its own demand." But the left-wingers tend to an equal error. They are apt to suppose that "demand always creates its own supply." Increased money wages and increased

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taxation of "hoards" may, it is true, result in more spending, but will people always get more goods? Not necessarily. Existing stocks may be cleared, but will the retailer place a new order for more if he expects no profit? Will the manufacturer *add* to his plant if he expects only to break even on the *extra* cost? The chances are that at best he will do no more than keep existing capacity occupied. Growth will be slow; unemployment will rise in the investment-goods industries, for they depend on a constant increase of output. More spending does not automatically translate itself into more production; bigger demand need not mean more jobs.

Accordingly, it seems to me that if we are to work out a policy that will really permit rapid social growth and increased opportunity we have got to accept proposals from both schools of economy. From the left-wing program we will take the principle of deficit finance, when needed, to stabilize purchasing power within tolerable limits. But, along with the right-wingers, we will remember, when it comes to taxation, the need for incentives and for allowing some leeway to management. Without such a combination I can see very little hope for the continued growth of the American economy. This is what I mean by "filling in."

If we move into a depression in the near future, we are likely, it seems to me, to have a monstrous combination: orthodox budget policy combined with extreme left-wing tax and labor policy --in other words, the worst policies of both schools.

—David McCord Wright

Il Conte's Adventure

Count Marzotto confounds the Italian left wing by giving farm hands part-time industrial work

The big man sits at the wheel of his Lancia roadster like Caesar on horseback. His eyes are deeply set, his shoulders massive. With one huge gloved hand he steers the car deftly; he gesticulates with the other. He has something of the imperious intensity of the midsummer sun which saturates these ripening coastal plains north of Venice.

On both sides of the road run rich fields of corn, beets, and flax; then long orchards and vineyards; and after a while, unexpectedly on this burgeoning plain, rows of bright new buildings. This is the new village of Santa Margherita, linked to the industrial center of Villanova. The man who built this village, Count Gaetano Marzotto, slows down the car.

"Here," he says, "is the agricultural school. The children study two hours each day and work in the fields for three or four hours. There is the nursery for the workers' children. Behind it, the maternity hospital and the old peoples' home. This is the employees' club—for all the workers. Just beyond are the swimming pool and the sports field. Now we come to the industries."

He hurtles the car over rough, unfinished patches of road. Workmen jump out of the way and remove their caps. The big man seems scarcely to see them. Sometimes he delivers an explosive command to clear the road. Then he talks on torrentially. Everything about Count Marzotto is torrential—his talk, his energy, his purposefulness.

"This is the building for drying beets," he continues. "Here we will store them before making sugar. Over there we will process the fruit juices. A hundred million bottles a year. Not as big as Coca-Cola, but for Italy it is something. We will sell them for five cents a small bottle. Here we will process our milk, and sell it at the going price. These are the factories for spinning linen and cotton. This is the wine plant. We will produce six hundred thousand bottles a year, and about half will be made from our own vineyards. All the machinery is new—the most modern."

Orchards and fields of flax stretch away beyond the industrial buildings. On the other side of the road stand a dozen large, two-family houses, in which the workers live. Each unit contains two bathrooms and five bedrooms, which is not quite as lavish as it sounds because twelve people are supposed to sleep in them.

"You saw those young women at the spinning machines," the big man says. "Six weeks ago they had never operated a machine. The farm laborers who before had no work for six months will now have work the year around. We have four hundred industrial workers this summer. We will have a thousand in winter. By October everything will be ready. And we will have intensive farming here—with the finest tractors, sprinklers, and other equipment —something we never had before. It is only a little business. It is—what do you call it?—a pilot installation. But here I will prove it is possible so to organize agriculture and industry that people can work the year round."

As he talks, Marzotto drives on another few kilometers to his agricultural center of Torresella, the other focus of

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his experiment. Actually, Marzotto has put through a kind of agrarian reform never seen in Italy until now—reform initiated on his own by a big landowner and capitalist, carried out with millions in cash, remarkable imagination, and all the instruments of modern technology. In Torresella, there are great modern barns with cement floors; silos, workshops, and milking machines; some six hundred pure-bred Holstein cows, and eight hundred more to come; seven hundred and fifty pigs; five prize Holstein bulls, flown over from Canada; fifteen hundred young calves on the way, for eventual reduction to veal *scallopine*.

Count Marzotto speeds around his 3,500-acre project with a fact and a figure at every turn. He has put $4,500,000 into this "pilot installation," designed to prove that agriculture and industry together can achieve a productive efficiency hitherto undreamed-of in Italy—and many other countries. But is not its cost prohibitive? Can it be made to pay?

Gaetano Marzotto is one of the six richest men in Italy; he is one of the most successful industrialists. He owns seven textile factories in seven cities, a fine marble quarry, and business buildings in Milan. He is the builder and owner of whole new towns where his large, buzzing textile plants are located. In the United States Marzotto would have given Ford and Carnegie punishing competition for top place as a millionaire industrialist.

He figures every enterprise down to the last *lira*. On the Santa Margherita farm-and-industry project, Count Marzotto is creating a hundred farms of twenty-five acres apiece, each with a house large enough for a family of twelve, at a cost per unit of about $10,000. The farms will be share-cropped; fifty per cent of the earnings will go to those who work the land. After paying administrative costs, taxes, and the like, Marzotto will receive, he estimates, a 7.3-per cent return on his entire investment.

The Count drives on to Jesolo Beach, a vacation shore resort that he recently built for his employees some twenty miles north of Venice. In mid-July, three hundred children arrived, the first batch this summer. There are four large, well-equipped hotels, a large seaside restaurant, a dairy unit, a hospital, and a church. Because the Adriatic is often cold, there are three swimming pools—one for adults, two for children. They cost $1,500,000. The restaurant kitchen is as modern as any in a New York hotel. The menus provide for four meals, including tea—a total of 4,200 calories a day.

"For their hotel room and board," Marzotto explains, "adults pay 325 *lire* per day. We can accommodate fifteen hundred persons here. At 325 *lire* a head, all our operating costs will be paid." Three hundred and twenty-five *lire* is fifty-six cents.

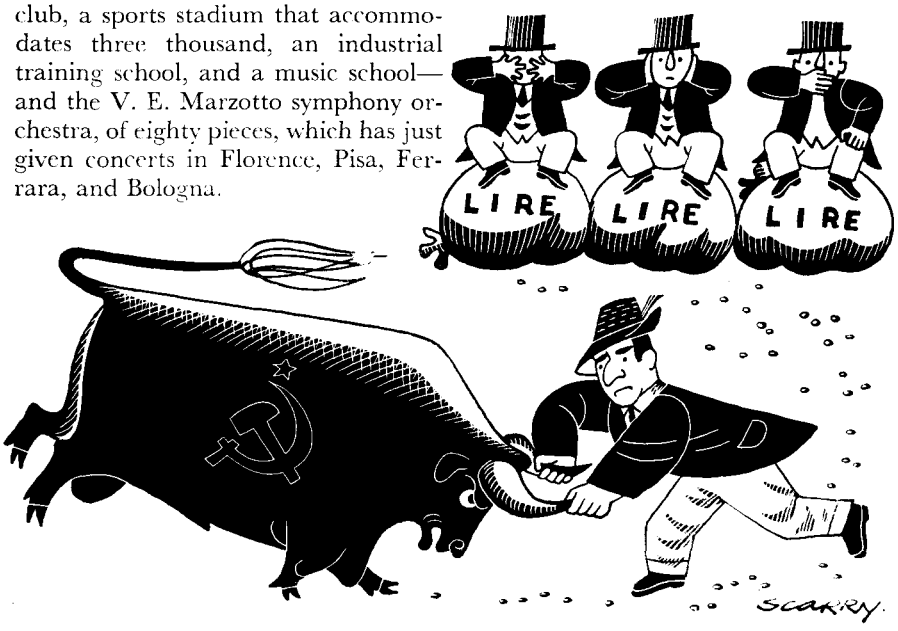
At the seashore, as everywhere else in the Marzotto empire, people move for the Count on the jump. Marzotto is as high-keyed as Fiorella LaGuardia was, but much more somber and serious. He has surprisingly little of the Italian capacity for jest.

The vast Marzotto empire got started in 1836, when the Count's grandfather founded a textile plant at Valdagno, in the province of Vincenza, near Venice. The Count's father inherited it, but in 1922 he was shot by a laborer and died within a few months. At twenty-seven Gaetano Marzotto took over. He then employed fourteen hundred workers, about a tenth of his present textile force. Right off, Marzotto made an entirely new town of Valdagno. It contains a hotel, a theater, a hospital, a kindergarten (where workers' children are cared for by nuns while their parents work—at five *lire* per day for nursery care), scores of modern houses and apartment buildings, a workers' club, a sports stadium that accommodates three thousand, an industrial training school, and a music school—and the V. E. Marzotto symphony orchestra, of eighty pieces, which has just given concerts in Florence, Pisa, Ferrara, and Bologna.

In 1934, as Fascist controls became more oppressive, Marzotto set off on a two-year cruise around the world. On the trip, he says, he became interested in agrarian problems. When he returned to Italy, he began to buy land. Then the war started. Toward the end, the Nazis drove him into hiding, and for eight months Marzotto lived in a half-bombed house near the Swiss frontier with one of his five sons. They ventured out only at night.

"I realized for the first time what a peasant's life is like," he says. He had more time to think than he had ever had before—and he thought mostly about a coordinated farm-industrial system. The agitation for land reform in Italy after the war gave him the final impetus. In Marzotto's judgment it is folly to split land into small holdings, and lose the efficiency of cultivation by modern machinery. Big landowners with abundant capital, he thinks, should blaze a new trail, and human labor must also be made more productive. In a country like Italy this can only be done, Marzotto believes, by bringing industrial employment to the several million part-time farm workers, who are now idle for six months in the year, by setting up factories that use nearby farm crops.

"A lot of big industrialists and landowners are waiting to see the result of what I'm doing," says Marzotto. "Some would be happy if I went bankrupt. They don't want to face the realities of life. First they said, 'He's throwing his money away.' Then they said, '*He* can



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afford to spend—but we can't spend like that.' Now they begin to realize that this may be the right road. But they look for all the difficulties. If I can make this succeed, with a fair profit, then they may be compelled to adopt the same methods. But the bourgeoisie only want to play.

"Why do I risk so much of my capital when there is the possibility of an agrarian reform that would wipe out all big landowners? If that happened, land would be reduced everywhere to such small holdings that intensive mechanized agriculture would become impossible. To halt this madness, there must be a demonstration that another system can be found that is much more profitable — more profitable for the farm laborer, for the capitalist, and for the nation. This is what I was thinking at first. It was only after a while that I saw its political meaning. This agrarian-industrial experiment of mine is the most practical answer to Communism in Italy."

What about the extensive social-welfare benefits in the Marzotto textile communities, and the employee benefits such as the resort at Jesolo? Do they also restrain Communist growth?

Count Marzotto cites the results of the elections in April, 1948. In Valdagno his textile plant employs nine thousand. Five miles away in Schio the Rossi textile works employs ten thousand. In Valdagno the anti-Communist parties received some thirteen thousand votes, the Communist bloc fifteen hundred. In Schio, the Communist bloc obtained over eight thousand votes, the anti-Communist parties seventy-five hundred. At Manerbio, another Marzotto textile town, Communists won only ten per cent of the vote—but agrarian workers nearby, not Marzotto's, gave them three times as many votes. Today the Italian Communists are doing their most successful proselytizing among the part-time, miserably-housed agrarian workers. Marzotto has doubled the earnings of his farm-industrial laborers at Santa Margherita, so he is not worried about many votes going to Togliatti.

The Communists, as well as Socialists and other anti-clericals, often lay into Marzotto on the ground that social welfare and education in all his communities are closely linked to the Church. Marzotto is both a loyal Catholic and an ardent supporter of the Christian Democratic Party. Nuns administer his workers' nurseries, teach in his schools, and nurse in his hospitals. This, of course, is according to the traditional Italian pattern.

Admittedly, one of the most striking aspects of Count Marzotto's welfare state is its overwhelming paternalism. The atmosphere is pretty much one of a benevolent autocracy. Workers, for instance, stand at attention when he addresses them. When an executive finds the Valdagno orchestra's splendid musicians seated at rehearsal and starts to thank them at the end of a number, all immediately stand up. Even at Jesolo, the Count keeps a sharp eye on his workers' amusements. To an American he appears distinctly feudal. So far there is little evidence that the Marzotto enterprise will produce a greater sense of equality, independence, and democracy in the workers.

Average Italian workers desperately need guidance toward greater responsibilities—in their occupations, in their communities, and in self-government. In the Marzotto domain, it does not appear that the workers are being schooled to accept these. The big man happily carries them all on his own broad shoulders, while preparing his five sons to take over when the time comes. Count Marzotto finds the need for education most urgent among people of his own class. A few other great Italian industrial concerns have established important social benefits of various kinds for their workers, but many Italian industrialists regard Marzotto as a radical and a menace, hardly less dangerous than the Communists.

"The monopolists of flax, sugar, and the rest are opposed to me because they see that their monopolies may be broken," Marzotto says. "We have two kinds of capitalists: those who are used to competition and those who are afraid of competition and used to subsidies and protection. The latter want to go on doing business with other people's money. I am one of those who pays his own way.

"What these other capitalists forget is that Communism comes as a result of centralization. The man in the street says, 'If I must pay trusts, I prefer to pay the state.' But state monopolies are Bolshevism. Trust monopolies are the quickest road to that Bolshevism."

With that, the Count was through for the day. As we moved toward the car to leave Jesolo, jazz started to blare from loud-speakers over the beach. The Count noticed it immediately. He beckoned to an employee, and called an order. Jesolo will have civilized melodies in the future.

—Our European Editor

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Economic Phoenix: Düsseldorf

Dismantling and lack of capital irritate the Ruhr industrialists, who have been rebuilding factories and leaving homes in ruins

The most important city in Germany today is not Frankfurt, nor Bonn, nor even Berlin, but Düsseldorf. The dispatches usually come from Frankfurt or Berlin, where most American correspondents are stationed, but in the long run, the political melodramas put on in those cities, and soon to be put on in Bonn, will mean much less than the almost unobserved economic performance in the Ruhr. For the Ruhr produces nine-tenths of the coal and seventeen-twentieths of the steel of western Germany. Without this coal and this steel, the struggle for Germany, and in Germany, would lose most of its fascination and significance.

The heart of the Ruhr has always been—and is now more than ever—Düsseldorf. The city is not as large as Cologne, but it is much closer to the vast complex of mill towns—Essen, Bochum, Duisburg, and the rest. When the British Military Government set up headquarters in Düsseldorf, it became a political as well as an economic magnet. Perhaps the quickest and easiest way to discover how much life there is in the Ruhr is to find out how much there is in Düsseldorf.

At first glance, Düsseldorf today does not make sense: Its contradictions are almost grotesque.

Like all the great industrial centers in the Rhineland, Düsseldorf was hit very hard. About sixty-five per cent of the town was wiped out. Block after block in the central business district, which had the biggest hotels, restaurants, and office buildings, was transformed into ghastly ruins. When I went through it four years ago, the look and the smell of Düsseldorf were equally horrible. There was no time then to pry behind the rubble, and one involuntarily jumped to the conclusion that Düsseldorf, and perhaps Germany itself, was dead. How could a great city that took hundreds of years to build be rebuilt in our time? And how could an industrial civilization survive without cities?

The answers are in Düsseldorf. Most of the ruins are still ruins. But they are very neat, clean ruins. All the filth has been cleared away, and a new class of millionaires has sprung up among the shrewder Germans who dealt in scrap. The rubble and the ruins together were once very unnerving. The naked outline of ruins have now become familiar and undisturbing, except at night, when they still look ominous.

The Königsallee, a long, broad, and elegant street, the Champs Elysées or Fifth Avenue of Düsseldorf, took a frightful beating from the air. All the upper stories still show it. But down below are new department stores, specialty shops, restaurants, outdoor cafés with gaily colored umbrellas, night clubs, bars, and expensive enterprises of almost every description. It is impossible to get parking space in mid-afternoon for almost half a mile along the Königsallee, and all the cars are German. Seats at the cafés are snapped up as soon as anyone leaves.

The stores are jammed with good things to eat, wear, and own. They attract mostly window-shoppers. Many look and few buy, which is one reason why the stores are so full of goods. A shirt, for instance, costs twenty marks. The average German salary is fifty marks a week.

It was harder to get a ticket to a production of *Faust* at the Opernhaus in Düsseldorf than it would be at the Metropolitan in New York. The Komödchen Cabaret is probably the finest of its kind in western Germany. The floor show is presented in the back room of a bar on a typical bombed-out street, but the wit and acting are first-rate. The jokes are mostly political—usually at the expense of the occupying powers. At the Goldene Treppe, one of the de luxe restaurants, waiters in tails or white jackets come up with food as extravagant as any ever served in Germany. There were no empty tables the day I was there, and no British customers, either. It is notorious that the British messes are much more modest than the American or French. Now they are far below the standard of better German restaurants. Germans who used to work for the British gladly because they could eat better are leaving because they can now do so well outside. One British press official in Düsseldorf remarked with a faint smile that her German secretary was bringing her eggs "because she must think I'm starving."

The finest symbol of Düsseldorf's

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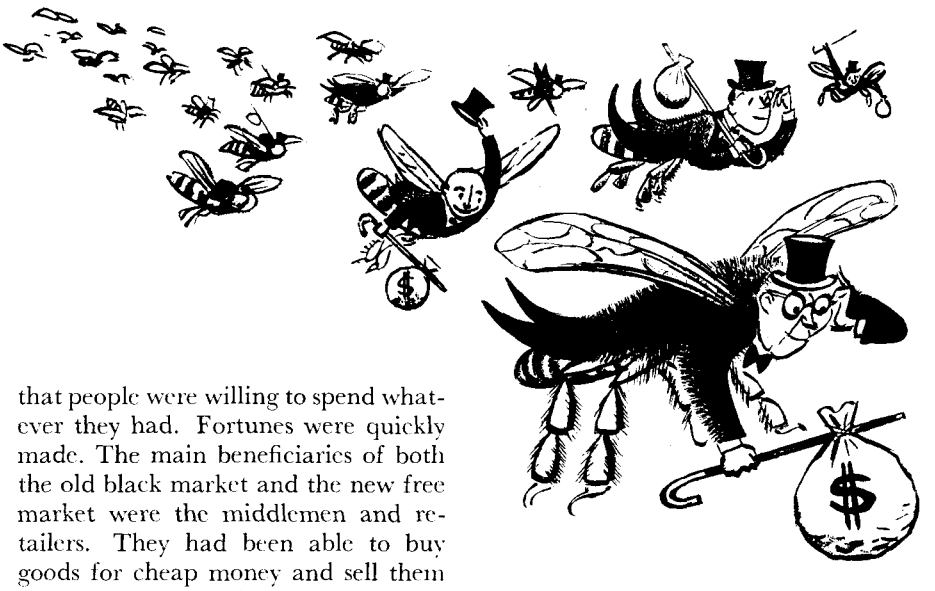
suffering and rebirth is located right across the street from the main British headquarters, which is in the building of the former steel cartel. Before the war, the only synagogue in Düsseldorf stood there. It was burned to the ground in the great pogrom of 1938. During the war, a giant bunker was built on the site. It could hold two thousand people, and was reserved for women and children, and men over sixty. Now the bunker has been transformed into the largest hotel in Düsseldorf. With a good deal of ingenuity, decently appointed rooms, all underground, were partitioned off. One entrance into the former bunker now leads into the first-class reception room of the hotel, the other into an expensive restaurant. On top of the hotel is a parking lot.

Except for one thing, it would be very easy to pass by the underground hotel without giving much thought to the historical meaning of that particular spot. Engraved on the wall between the two entrances are the words: "Here stood the synagogue of the Jewish community of Düsseldorf. It was the victim of racial falsehood on November 9, 1938. There still live fifty-five Jewish fellow-citizens of a proud community of 3,500. To the honored memory of the dead and as warning to the living. The community of Düsseldorf, November 9, 1946."

The epidemic of stores instead of dwellings was one consequence of the currency reform a year ago. The day before the currency reform, the stores were empty; the day after, they were full of goods. The transformation was instantaneous and, for most people, utterly incomprehensible. Where did all the stuff come from? A surprising amount was prewar stock that had been hidden away through the war and occupation. The rest had been accumulating since V-E Day, but had not been put on sale because the old Reichsmarks were considered practically worthless. When the new, "good" marks appeared, the retailers rushed to their hideouts and filled up their shelves and windows with articles, of every imaginable variety, that had not been on sale for ten years.

Customers flocked in and bought wildly. The exchange of ten Reichsmarks for one Deutsche mark had actually pauperized the average consumer. But so great was the hunger for goods



that people were willing to spend whatever they had. Fortunes were quickly made. The main beneficiaries of both the old black market and the new free market were the middlemen and retailers. They had been able to buy goods for cheap money and sell them for dear money. This hectic and novel experience of profit-taking on a large scale went to the heads of profit-starved businessmen. Capital rushed in to exploit the first easy success. The extreme shortage of capital in Germany made it very difficult to invest in industry, and the marks available flowed into consumer goods and retail markets.

Yet Düsseldorf still stands first of all for heavy industry. Since the factories are mostly on the outskirts, they are less in evidence than the stores, and it is more difficult to find out what has happened to them. The figures, however, show that they have been revived even more than retail trade. Whereas trade has come back to seventy per cent of the 1936 level, industrial production has risen to ninety per cent. Of the sixteen hundred plants in Düsseldorf before the war, six hundred were destroyed or severely damaged, so that the total industrial loss amounted to about one-third. At the lowest point of 1947, owing both to war damage and economic stagnation in general, only about twenty per cent of the prewar productive capacity was employed. Today only twenty per cent is *not* being employed.

In order to see what was behind these figures, I chose to investigate an important and typical plant, the West German Mannesmann Tube Corporation. The Mannesmann trust used to be one of the giants of German heavy industry, operating two coal mines, three steel works, three tube works, and a small empire of affiliates. The Mannesmann Tube Works was the only such plant to suffer widespread war damage, so that its experience leans to the unhappy side.

One of the three tube plants, located in Rath, on the outskirts of Düsseldorf, suffered about forty per cent war damage. On closer examination, however, it turned out that seventy-five per cent of this damage was inflicted on the buildings and only twenty-five per cent on the machinery. At present, half of the bombed buildings—but only about fifteen per cent of the machines—are still damaged. The plant employed 3,500 workers in 1936 and it employs 2,800 today. It expects to get back to the 1936 figure in two years.

Mannesmann also provides a good example of what decartelization has meant. The Mannesmann trust was "decartelized" on March 1, 1948. This signified that the three tube works at Rath, Remscheid, and Witten were "separated" from the parent company, Mannesmann Tube, and then were organized as the West German Mannesmann Tube Corporation. The parent company "asked" two of its top executives to step over into the new company. Thus Herr Bungeroth and Dr. Gnoth of Mannesmann Tube became the technical director and the economic director, respectively, of the West German Mannesmann Tube Corporation. A new man, Herr L'habitant, was nominated by the trade unions to a newly created post, Director of Social Welfare. The executive who spoke to me was extremely bitter about the fact that decisions now have to be made by a majority vote of

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the three dictators. Two of the three are old hands at the game, and the new company is not so new that it has given up the name of Mannesmann.

As for the parent Mannesmann Tube Corporation, five of its seven directors were arrested as criminal offenders in the first flush of de-Nazification. Of these five, two have come back to the company. One of them is now its chief director.

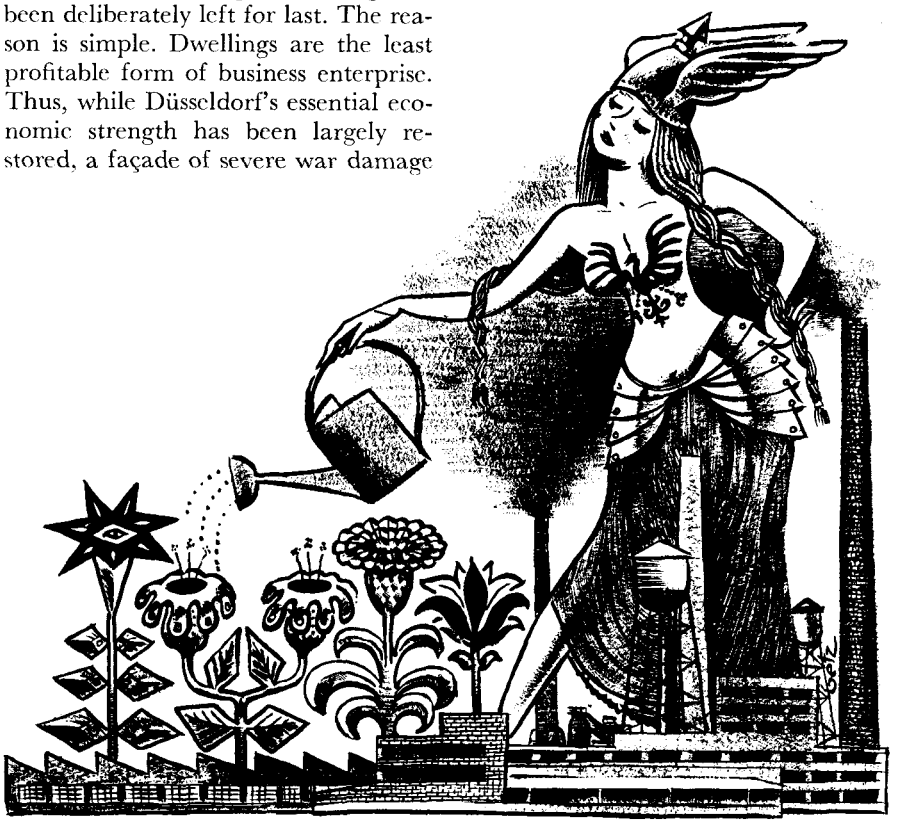
In common with all heavy industry, the West German Mannesmann Tube Corporation is most disturbed at the moment by the threat of dismantling. Of a total capacity of 26,600 tons at full production, three plants with a total capacity of 5,250 tons are slated for dismantling. Even if the company loses them, which it may not, it would still hold on to more than eighty per cent of its productive capacity.

In the picture of Düsseldorf's recovery, however, there is one big drawback. The building of dwellings has not kept pace with that of shops or plants. There were 540,000 single rooms in Düsseldorf in 1939, 215,800 in 1945, and 245,274 in 1949. In other words, of the 324,200 rooms destroyed, only 29,474 have been rebuilt. That amounts to less than ten per cent.

This explains the ruins above the shops. The rebuilding of dwellings has been deliberately left for last. The reason is simple. Dwellings are the least profitable form of business enterprise. Thus, while Düsseldorf's essential economic strength has been largely restored, a façade of severe war damage has been left on the streets. A visitor riding around the inner city could still be pardoned for wondering how long it takes to rebuild a great city. He might still shudder at the spectacle. But he would be missing the main point. In 1945, the ruins seemed more important than the remains. Today the remains are more important than the ruins.

The outlook at the moment is rather cloudy. As a direct result of the currency reform, business in the three western zones made a spectacular recovery from June to December, 1948. But it slowed down perceptibly from January to May, 1949. Now businessmen are frankly worried, for reasons peculiar to Germany, and as a result of the generally downward international trend.

Everyone here complains about the same thing: too little money, too little capital, too little credit. As a result, there have been some harsh second thoughts about the currency reform that was once regarded as miraculous. It tried to solve the problem of inflation in a single day, which was probably too drastic. After one year, the opposite evil—deflation—threatens. Last year there was too much money and not enough goods. This year there is not enough money and too many goods. The currency reform took money away, but no one seems to know how to get it back.



After the currency reform, practically all price controls and rationing systems were abandoned in similar haste. Anyone can buy as much butter, meat, clothing, or anything else as he can afford. Sugar and fats are still rationed, but the allowance is admittedly adequate. If free enterprise reigns anywhere in Europe, it is in western Germany. The inevitable effect is that the *nouveaux riches* spend too much too obviously on luxuries, and most people can buy only bare necessities. The suspicion is growing that the retail businesses have priced themselves out of the mass market and that they will be the next to suffer. If experience is any guide, it is likely that the storekeepers will hold on grimly to their stocks, even if they have to put them out of sight again.

What worries Düsseldorf most is the fate of heavy industry. The war damage no longer holds first place in the attention of the economic planners. The Ruhr industrialists know that they have brought back their vast complex of furnaces, mills, and factories almost to their former pre-eminence in Europe, and that they can recover the remaining ten or fifteen per cent in a relatively short time. The head of the Economic Planning Department in Düsseldorf told me that any industry could come back to normal in a single year, if the money, material, and labor were available, and if there were no longer the threat of dismantling.

The reason there has been such an uproar in Germany over the recent revival of dismantling is that the Germans consider it the greatest obstacle to their recovery. They are much more concerned about losing machinery altogether, as a result of dismantling, than about repairing machinery damaged in the war. To replace massive and complex equipment in the great works may take a few years, to repair it a few months.

As usual, the Germans would like to have their cake and eat it too. They would like nothing better than a great influx of foreign credits, on the order of 1924-1928. An American visitor wandering from city to city and town to town gets the same propaganda from businessmen, politicians, bureau-

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crats, storekeepers, hotel clerks, and waiters. Everyone complains: "Germany is suffering from a terrible shortage of capital; give us credits and you will be amazed; we cannot do it alone."

On the other hand, the same people want to be left alone. Make no mistake about it: They have regained their self-confidence and their pride of achievement, if they ever lost them. They know that they have accomplished a minor miracle in the single year since the currency reform. Gone are the days at the beginning of the occupation, when they begged for help and yearned for pity. Now they feel bitterly that they are being prevented, by such devices as dismantling, from aiding themselves.

This new spirit was recently reflected in a letter to the London *Economist* from the German economist, Dr. Ulrich Kuntzel, of the Institut für Weltwirtschaft at the University of Kiel. He charged that the Allies had "delayed" the currency reform, and he had the effrontery to add: "This delay was most probably due to a deliberate desire to keep German business disorganized, and its disorganizing effect upon German business morale will not be overcome in years." One of the favorite German explanations for the war, used by Communists and anti-Communists alike, is that, "after all," the war was a struggle between rival economic forces to eliminate competition, and that the occupation is a continuation of the same struggle.

Indeed, western Germany is bursting with frustration. Heavy industry is waiting for only two signals to break loose. The first is a feeling of security, which the dismantling program has severely shaken. The second is a large-scale injection of liquid capital, which can come only from the United States. It is not unlikely that, given a measure of political stability, another Dawes Plan would create another boom. Western Germany has more people and more productive capacity than it can put to use. It is looking desperately for a way to set them in motion. A little monetary manipulation started the process a year ago. Now something more is needed. This is the reality of the economic forces behind the ruined dwellings. This is how the whole thing started the last time.

—THEODORE DRAPER

Through a Monocle, Darkly

Once intrigued by our untrammeled culture, Britain's thinkers now view it, and our power, with reserve

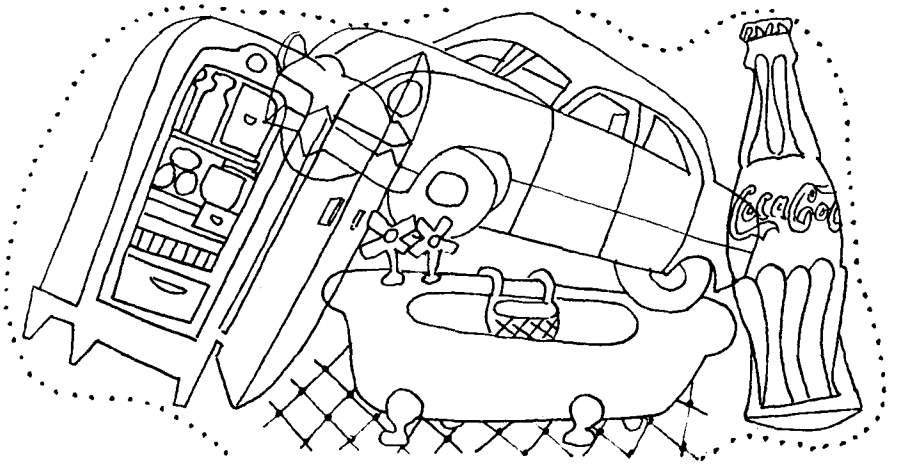
Among British intellectuals there is a baffled exasperation about America. Whether they have visited this country or not, most of them are puzzled by the failure of America to conform to European pattern or theory. A left-wing intellectual recently told me, with considerable annoyance, "When I talk to a European—a Frenchman, Scandinavian, or Italian —we can agree on the terms we use, and can generally end up understanding each other. But there isn't much one can say to *any* American today, and come to a common denominator."

The ideas that British intellectuals have about America are more important than those that comparable Americans have about Britain, because intellectuals, regardless of party, still have far more to do with government under the British system than American intellectuals have under the political setup of the United States.

Socialist Britain is still ruled by an oligarchy. Oxford and Cambridge and the Public Schools still fill up the British Cabinet and all top Civil Service ranks. The American élite is so formless and fluid, so informal and so unélite, that most British intellectuals wonder, somewhat vaguely, how America gets run at all.

In the 1930's most British left-wing intellectuals were critical, first and foremost, of Britain. They disliked the government (especially after MacDonald's defection in 1931); they scorned Britain's foreign and colonial policy, its social and economic structure, and many of its cultural products. For a spiritual homeland, they looked to the Soviet Union in the East, or to America in the West. Of course, they condemned the capitalist system in America, as they did in their own country. But they liked the egalitarianism of America, and the exuberance of American books, plays, and films.

The last war brought a striking change. The same intellectuals of the left, who had been able to criticize their own country virulently when it



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was powerful, found this emotionally impossible with Britain, in enfeebled shape—especially after the Socialists took over in 1945. When they changed their minds about Britain, they changed them about America too.

At the time, Europe was going even further left than Britain, while the United States seemed likely to develop into the mainstay of world reaction. The British feared our involvement in world affairs, represented by loans and the ERP, and they were bewildered by American politics.

The most widely-repeated cliché among Britain's left-wing intellectuals since 1945 has been that Americans are politically immature, by which they mean, first, that the American *people* are politically immature because there is not an American labor party modeled on the British Labour Party, and, second, that our political leaders conspicuously lack maturity and skill.

Along with their political distrust of America, left-wing intellectuals in Britain have come to look very dimly upon the American cultural output they used to be so fond of; our films, novels, drama, and even our sports, all once admired for turbulent virility, are now often dismissed for immaturity or adolescent hysteria. What was once called lively American experimentalism now is considered simply a restless desire for change and a lack of respect for traditional values. Many British left-wing intellectuals have, as a matter of fact, developed an odd kind of cultural chauvinism, formerly associated rather with the Colonel Blimps than with the clear-eyed reformers down from the universities.

British intellectuals—and not only those of the left—speak deprecatingly of the "materialism" in American life. The left, again, speaks with somewhat more sharpness than the right, in deploring American obsession with deep-freezes, air-conditioning, Town and Country coupés, and Coca-Cola. The charges are, of course, true, but the accusers are on shaky ground in attacking what they call the low level of American culture. European culture has been almost entirely that of a small, *educated* minority, and there is, of course, a comparably erudite American minority. But the British intellectuals generally select for attack only the American *mass* culture and *mass* taste—which seems somewhat unfair.

Some of the old British admiration for American energy, enthusiasm, and informality remains. Some intellectuals —mainly of the center and the right —refer with warmth to the generosity of American aid to Europe. (The left still looks on the ERP mostly as a shoddy device for getting rid of American surpluses.) Among many of the critics and admirers, there is rather a curious attachment to what might be called the "raffish" side of American life: roadside barbecue stands; hot-jazz clubs; sidestreet bars with nickelodeons; the "Twenty-Six Game" in Chicago. All this, however, brings to mind the vogue for the Noble Savage that swept eighteenth-century Europe.

Yet the severity of British criticism must never be taken for a dislike of Americans. It is truer to say that Americans, as people, are popular. Aggression, resentment, and irritation are always generously mixed with affection. Sometimes the irritation—especially on the left—comes from a feeling that Americans are not coming up to the high standards these Britishers had set for them.

British intellectuals of *all* political opinions—and nonpolitical ones, too —are puzzled and concerned over a contemporary American paradox. They believe that Americans have many personal freedoms that Europeans lack. They do not doubt that Americans are genuinely devoted to individual liberty. But the one freedom most important to them—*intellectual* freedom—seems to them to be threatened more in America than in Britain. The British are much closer to the potential firing line, yet in Britain there is little of the emotional dread of Communists that now rages here. Scientists, professors, writers, and critics are not quarantined if they are Communists. Watching the reactions of Americans to Communism, Britain's intellectuals are fearful of what might happen to freedom of thought and expression in this country.

Their reasoning in the case goes back to British tradition. The British know that they are one people. Can it be, they ask, that the American fear of dangers from within comes from doubts about whether the country has genuine unity and *nationality?*

It would be wrong to underestimate the influence that some of this suspicion of America, especially among left-wingers, has on British policy and opinion. Though the British, like Americans, mistrust intellectuals, the former are far more influenced by them in their public life. And, operating deep beneath both the public surface and the personal consciousness of Britain today is a gnawing sense of guilt about having "fallen short" of traditional British standards and achievements: a widespread national sense of inadequacy. To British intellectuals, always the creative element of their own country, this inadequacy is a pestilent gall, a thorn in the flesh, and a scar in the spirit. It is *this* sense of guilt that they are largely projecting upon America, and we shouldn't be overly upset by it.

—MARJORIE BREMNER

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Indiana Discovers Insanity

It took a wave of psychopathic murders to give Hoosiers the idea that mental illness is not a crime, but may be the cause of crimes

A new viewpoint toward mental illness has come to Indiana, which hitherto has run its institutions for the insane on the principle of the barred attic room. Now it seems that, by degrees, the state's nineteenth-century madhouses may turn into real mental hospitals. Appropriations have already been made for the first major building program since 1910.

In Indiana, reform is usually a sometime, transient thing, but this one appears to have the characteristics of permanence. Since the end of the war, mental illness has been evinced in Indiana in a series of violent crimes, which have made it obvious that the folksy surface of Hoosier society has been concealing vast amounts of psychosis and psychoneurosis.

In Tarkington, Riley, and other writers who have celebrated the wholesomeness of Indiana, the sick in mind never appeared in the sunlight, unless briefly and wildly. Mental illness was an act of God, akin to those Indiana tornadoes that swirl out of a reddish dusk and sweep up farms like cosmic vacuum cleaners. Only recently has mental illness come into the literature as dramatic reality—in, for instance, Mary Jane Ward's *The Snake Pit*. Traditionally, the attitude toward mental illness in a state where individualism is precious has been to disregard it. When the sick one became unmanageable, he was "come for" by grim-faced, bulky men from the Central State Hospital. This place is a Victorian madhouse, with narrow, arched, barred windows, on the west side of Indianapolis. It has been known as Seven Steeples since the Civil War. Here the insane stayed until they escaped or died. Going to Seven Steeples was all but irrevocable. The only recourse there was to prayer. Until this year no significant change has been made in Seven Steeples or in the seven other mental institutions in the state.

In 1860, twenty-two of each hundred thousand persons in Indiana were in insane asylums. There are now about two hundred and fifty per hundred thousand, compared with ratios of more than five hundred per hundred thousand in New York and Massachusetts. These are the statistics of the new Indiana Mental Health Council. It maintains that Indiana is caring for only about half of its mentally ill, reasoning that insanity is undoubtedly as widespread in Indiana as it is in Massachusetts.

The new madman has replaced an older stereotype, usually harmless and a little comic. The new one is dangerous and cannot be laughed away: In 1946, a brooding boy of fourteen shot his foster mother to death in a fit of pique because she told him "for the umpteenth time" to get out and hoe the garden. Not long afterward a city schoolboy discharged a shotgun into the breast of his stepmother as she sat in her rocker sewing by the light of an old-fashioned lamp. She had criticized his schoolwork.

The scenery in both cases was traditionally romantic; both marked the disturbing entrance of a new kind of character who without warning goes berserk and bloodies up the premises.

A father killed his teen-age daughter after she came home late one Saturday night and described how two boys had seduced her. The distraught father immediately afterward killed himself. A farmer came into his house one Sunday afternoon and shot his wife and his brother-in-law. A WAC was murdered in an Indianapolis hotel room; a nurse was clubbed to death in the corridor of a nurses' home. (A suspect in this case admitted clubbing other women; he said he wanted to hurt somebody because everybody was always hurting him.)

Ralph Lobaugh, a 31-year-old gravedigger, confessed to the unsolved murders of three women in Fort Wayne. Since Lobaugh was sentenced to die, another man has been convicted of one of the slayings. It has begun to dawn on the state that Lobaugh was one of the most convincing psychopathic liars in criminal history. Lobaugh still resides in the death house of the Michigan City state prison, while the state Attorney General searches for a law to cover his kind of case.

A few cells away is a young Negro truck driver for the City of Indianapolis named Robert Austin Watts. By day he used to work on the sewer gang. By night, according to charges brought against him, he used to drive around town looking for women to rape. One

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evening—still according to the police bill of particulars—he invaded the suburban home of a socially-prominent white woman. She pointed a shotgun at him, but he is supposed to have grabbed it and blown her head off. Watts later confessed to a previous unsolved murder of an elderly woman and to twenty-six other assaults. (His conviction was reversed by the U. S. Supreme Court, which decided that his constitutional rights as a defendant had been violated. He will be retried.)

Watts—or a similar criminal—appeared in the fall of 1947 and soon terrified Indianapolis. Women believed they dared not walk on the streets after dark unescorted. Hardware and five-and-ten-cent stores mounted huge chain-lock displays in their windows.

A frightened state had found a new madman-bogey. It remained for the Mental Health Council to pinpoint him. An interracial committee was formed to ease the tensions growing out of the Watts case. It determined to find out what accounted for Watts.

The accused was known to every social-service agency in the county. He first had attracted attention as hard to handle in school when he was eight. As an adolescent, he won the reputation of an incorrigible. The records of the schools, the reformatory, and a half-dozen social-service agencies showed him to be "disturbed and maladjusted." No effort had been made to provide Watts with psychiatric service, because there wasn't any.

Probably no defendant in Indiana history was ever so completely studied. He was declared legally sane, but he was called an acute emotional problem. The nomenclature of mental illness suddenly popped into idiom. Words like "psychopathic" and "psychoneurotic" were added to the list of newspaper clichés. Motives for major crimes of violence were set down in a kind of psychiatric pidgin-English.

Suddenly, the status of psychiatrists improved. They generally had been confused with home-grown varieties of medicine men, like "hot-hands" healers, vibratory manipulators, practitioners of vinegar cures, and purveyors of odd roots. Watts became the godfather of Indiana's first attempt to deal with psychopaths specifically under the criminal law as psychopaths, rather than as criminals. The 1949 legislature enacted the Sexual Psychopathic law. Then legislators turned their attention to finding out why the mental institutions of the state were failing to do their job of keeping psychopaths off the streets. Groups of senators and representatives toured the madhouses in their districts. They were horrified at what they saw.

In the eight institutions, 13,500 men, women, and children were packed into rooms with bed space for ten thousand. Hundreds more were in county jails waiting for admission until somebody died or escaped. Nineteen psychoneurotic war veterans were kept in the Marion County jail in Indianapolis during April this year. One of them had been there eight weeks. The veterans' hospitals had no room for them; neither had the state hospitals. There was no turnover in the state hospitals because treatment was rudimentary. It consisted chiefly of confinement.

The eight institutions employed thirteen psychiatrists, or one for every thousand inmates. But only eight of the psychiatrists could devote full time to patients. The other five administered their institutions. They had to see about replastering ceilings, cutting grass, and instructing the cooks. The eight full-time psychiatrists would have been able to provide more electric convulsive therapy (shock treatment) if they had had the machines. They would have provided hydrotherapy if they had had the tubs. They would have given more malarial, penicillin, and insulin treatment, if they had had enough nurses. (There were only sixteen trained nurses in the eight institutions, and only four occupational therapists.) Cold packs might have proved effective, but there was barely enough refrigeration to keep food from spoiling.

Ordinary physicians could have helped, and did, but there were only thirty employed, and only three social workers.

When the 1949 legislature convened in January, enough shock treatment had been administered to the population by the psychopaths to bring conditions inside mental institutions into focus as a political problem. Just when lawmakers began peering into the barred windows, the Richmond State Hospital produced a murder. An elderly male patient died of a beating; two attendants were arrested and subsequently indicted by a grand jury on a murder charge. The excitement had hardly died down when a former female attendant of the same institution said she had been raped on its grounds by a pair of hospital guards.

One day in February, three representatives toured Central State Hospital, the oldest, largest, best staffed, and best equipped. They found the plaster peeling off the walls. The eighty-year-old wooden floors were hazardous. Some of the plumbing was out of order, and in some wards patients could bathe only once a fortnight. In the women's section, patients slept head to toe, their cots touching. The legislators inspected a low brick building where senile cases were caged. It smelled like a stable to two of the representatives, but a third said it recalled the concentration camp at Dachau. In the women's

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section of the "stables," a half-dozen diaper patients lay on cots in the corridors. The walls crawled with roaches. The rooms were illuminated by naked bulbs. "We're full up," commented a bulky woman attendant. "You boys better make your reservations early."

The legislature voted the biggest appropriation ever made for maintenance and reconstruction of the system. It authorized the expenditure of about fifteen million dollars to improve the five adult mental institutions, the state's village for epileptics, and its colony for the feebleminded. In addition the legislature authorized construction of a three-thousand-bed hospital in northern Indiana, in order to relieve overcrowding. It will eventually cost seven million dollars. A second new hospital has been authorized for the Indiana University Medical Center at Indianapolis.

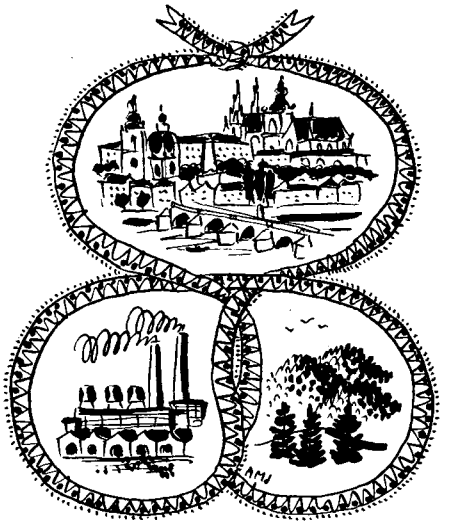
This will be a hospital to screen all new mental patients, providing thirty- to ninety-day initial treatment. It is the most complete institution for mental illness ever planned in the state. The Indiana Mental Health Council, which has now achieved the status of a state agency, with a good deal of authority, hopes the screening hospital will become a research center and attract a staff of young psychiatrists from eastern cities.

The Mental Health Council eventually will coordinate all mental-health programs in the state and supervise private as well as public institutions. It has projected child guidance and neuropsychiatric clinics for the future, but is a long way from having the means to build them. It also proposes psychiatric counseling service for public schools, but the school boards do not appear to be ready for that. Financial wherewithal for the rehabilitation of the state's madhouses is now being sought, but it is not assured. That depends on the state's ability to raise taxes. While financing relies on economic tides, the pressures which produced the new attitude toward mental health will continue as long as there are depredations of the mentally ill on the population.

It was, after all, the sick in mind who tragically and violently turned public attention to themselves. It might be said that there was some method in their madness. —RICHARD LEWIS

Glittering Bankrupt

A former Czech finance official says his nation, having turned to the East, now faces insolvency



Last December Prime Minister Zápotocký of Czechoslovakia, along with his ministers of Finance, Industry, and National Defense, flew to Moscow to announce a grim fact—his country was rapidly going bankrupt.

The situation was this: By the end of 1948, ten months after the Communist coup, the Czechoslovak National Bank's foreign credit was down to four billion crowns (approximately eighty million dollars), in spite of determined efforts to keep the credit balance at twelve billion. Financial experts estimated that the balance was disappearing so rapidly that it would be gone in another ten months.

When Zápotocký returned to Prague, an official statement was given out that an unspecified sum of gold and free currencies had been promised Czechoslovakia by the Soviet government. The Ministry of Finance was told a somewhat different story. The Soviets were not prepared to make a general loan to Czechoslovakia. If, in the future, it became impossible for the Czechoslovak National Enterprises to make deliveries to the U.S.S.R. because of shortages of raw materials that could be bought only in western currencies, the Soviet government would extend credit for this specific purpose. That was not an offer of economic assistance comparable to the Marshall Plan; it was a promise of further economic exploitation.

How did the richest industrial country of eastern Europe get itself into such a financial mess? After the First World War, Czechoslovakia inherited nearly forty per cent of Austro-Hungarian industry. Highly skilled labor and well-equipped plants produced world-famous textiles; the Skoda works and the Zbrojovka (Bren gun) factory sold armaments as far away as South America and China. Czech glass, Gablonz costume jewelry, Pilsener beer, timber, and other products brought enough foreign exchange to make Czechoslovakia one of western Europe's best customers. The Czech crown was favored in the Balkans over the pound and the dollar.

The Nazi occupation from 1939 to 1945 ended this happy state of affairs. All Czech exports were controlled by the Deutsche Reichsbank in Berlin, which kept the foreign exchange and credited crowns to the account of the National Bank in Prague. For example, the Skoda works sold guns and ammunition to Spain; the Goering Werke of Berlin handled the delivery; the Reichsbank collected the Spanish pesetas; and the Czech National Bank was credited in a "special account." This account in turn was charged with arbitrary amounts for German occupation costs in Czechoslovakia. By the end of the war there was a balance of approximately fifteen billion crowns in Czechoslovakia's favor, but it was then worthless.

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Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia came out of the war comparatively unscathed. A few oil refineries and a small part of the Skoda works had been bombed; on the other hand, the Germans had modernized and enlarged many Czech plants. Thus, after Germany's collapse in 1945, Czechoslovakia had the industrial means for a quick recovery. In one or two years it could have been a happy, rich island in central Europe—not a destitute country whose currency is worth hardly anything in foreign exchange. What went wrong?

Certainly there were contributory causes stemming from the breakdown of the Nazi empire, the complete disruption of transport facilities, and the physical letdown among workers who had been exhausted in wartime. The underlying disaster, of course, was the political one inspired by a Communist Party determined to bring Czechoslovakia into its grip at whatever cost.

Communism does not grow in a prosperous country. For this reason the Czech Communist Party set out to retard recovery in every possible way. Even though statistics showed that production per man-hour was only fifty per cent of prewar, the Communists told the workers they were producing fast enough and that their standard of living (quite good for postwar Europe) should be raised immediately. The idea was to run through the stock of supplies and raw materials left from the war as rapidly as possible.

As a result, the first half of 1946 was a period of incredible prosperity. There was a relatively good supply of food, clothing, footwear, and furniture in the market. UNNRA shipments, possessions left by the two and a half million expelled Sudeten Germans, and huge stocks of Nazi military stores were distributed. Increased exports provided the National Bank with a new supply of foreign currency.

Klement Gottwald, the Czech Communist leader, was extremely skillful in his strategy. Even as Deputy Prime Minister he showed no hesitancy in criticizing the Coalition Government of which he was a part. He gave credit for all favorable developments to the fact that the Communist Party was participating in the Government for the first time in history. He blamed the other three political parties, which formed a majority, for every conceivable evil such as the lack of housing.

Immediately after the election in May, 1946, the Communists, who had won a plurality of thirty-seven per cent, made their bid for power. They took charge of the Ministry of Interior, controlling the police force; the Ministry of Labor; the Ministry of Information; and many of the trade unions. Before long, they were in complete control, and Czechoslovakia was utterly dependent upon the Soviet Union.

A Two-Year Plan was set up by the policymakers. Its goal was to surpass the 1937 production level by ten per cent in 1948. This sounded commendable at first, but even the most cursory research revealed its shortcomings. The market for Czech products in 1948 was not as large as it had been in 1937. Western Europe did not need Czech textiles, glassware, and other luxury products; instead, market surveys, if they had been made, would have shown a ready market for small electric motors, motorcycles, enamelware, and many other articles which Czechoslovakia was perfectly capable of producing.

But if western Europe could not use the old-time products, the Communist East could. It has eagerly consumed everything its new satellite has turned out. Shipments to the Soviet Union alone leaped from a prewar level of 1.7 per cent of total exports to fifty-four per cent in 1948.

There was a fatal flaw in this situation. Czechoslovakia does not need the products of Russia and the other satellites. Eastern European countries cannot even supply Czechoslovakia with the raw materials that go into the products which those nations purchase. Russian cotton canont be used in Czech textile mills without a supplement of Egyptian cotton. Dyes from Switzerland are needed for cloth, and borax from the United States for enameled goods. Machinery, cars, textiles, and footware are sold for rubles when all the raw materials for their manufacture have to be paid for in dollars, pounds, or other western money.

The Five-Year Plan instituted in 1948 merely intensified the problem. Again no attempt was made to study market conditions in order to develop a balanced export-import program commensurate with Czech needs. Basically, the Five-Year Plan calls for a forty-eight-per cent increase in production by 1953, with special attention to heavy industrial goods for the Soviet Union. The plan blithely ignores the fact that Czechoslovakia lacks the huge presses and rolling mills needed for this output. One purpose of the futile trade mission to Washington this spring was to persuade the United States to lift its embargo on heavy industrial exports to Czechoslovakia, and to lend money to pay for them. In view of the present world situation, it was a hopeless request.

The Five-Year Plan cannot succeed. More tragically, it is the force which is pushing Czechoslovakia toward ruin. Each step along the way provides excuses for more Soviet interference and exploitation. At Moscow last December the Czechs didn't get a loan, but they were directed to undertake new trade commitments among the satellites and to contribute to the financial program of the Soviet-sponsored Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Czechoslovakia has been instructed to integrate its economy with Poland's—a program which cannot possibly work advantageously for smaller, more industrialized Czechoslovakia.

When I left Prague in March, there were 1.4 billion crowns in foreign exchange left—hardly enough to last through the fall. Internally, strong inflationary pressures are aggravating the situation. According to the Five-Year Plan, more than sixty-five billion crowns must be invested by the government during 1949. Bank experts estimate that notes in circulation will be forced to rise from eighty billion crowns in January to well over 125 billion by the end of the year—at a time when the stores are very short of merchandise.

Unless Czechoslovakia finds a quick remedy for its foreign-exchange shortage—and this can only be a large loan in western currency—an economic crisis is unavoidable. It may be camouflaged by some means known only to totalitarian economists. One temporary expedient may be to adopt Russia's expedient in 1947 and cut the value of notes in circulation by ninety per cent. But whatever the camouflage, Czechoslovakia, still the richest nation of eastern Europe, still glittering in comparison to most of its satellite neighbors, is bankrupt. —HUGO SKALA

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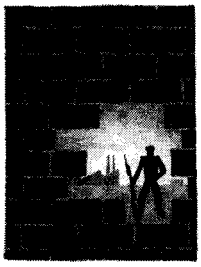
Books

They Didn't Go Back



In *Thirteen Who Fled* (Harper, $3) the foreign correspondent Louis Fischer, who spent many years in Russia, presents the personal histories of thirteen Russian men and women who decided, after the war, that they preferred life in a displaced-persons camp in Germany to life in their native land. We are assured that these sketches were not ghost-written, and that the editors had to overcome a great deal of suspicion and inertia before they could find even thirteen Russian D.P.'s who were willing and able to write out their own stories. Everything in the book confirms this assertion of authenticity—the differences of style, the range of temperament from stoic to sentimental, the attitudes varying from near hysteria to unaffected and relatively tranquil simplicity.

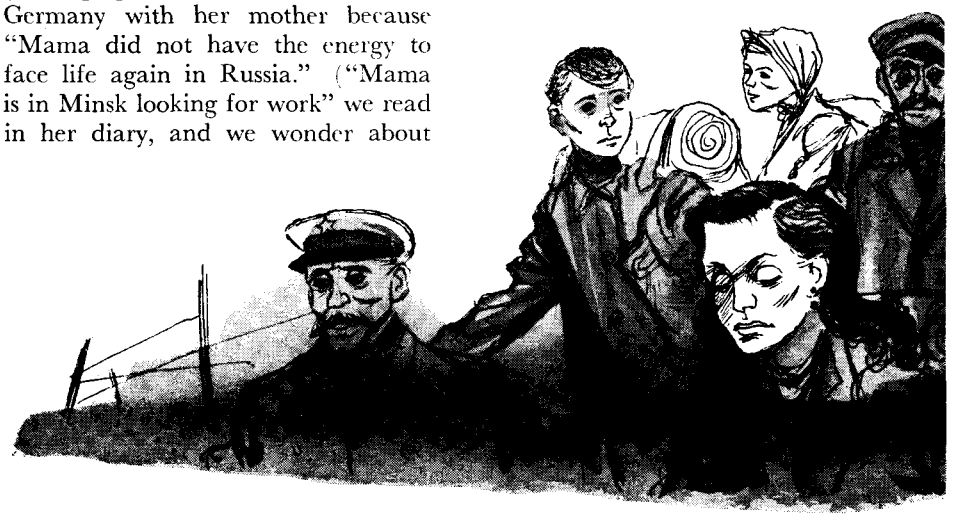
The contributors come from a number of villages, and from the cities of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, Archangel, and Kursk. The most highly placed among them is a former member of the All-Union Physical Culture Committee, which functioned immediately under the U.S.S.R. Cabinet, the *Sovnarkom*. Another, an elderly man, was a Red Army colonel; a third is a *kulak,* who once owned twenty-seven acres of farmland. Five were formerly students; another (curiously, in Russia) is identifiable only as a housewife, and there are also a carpenter, a factory worker, and a veterinarian.

Two were born in the nineteenth century, a half dozen were born between 1900 and the Revolution of 1917, and the last five are of post-revolutionary birth. This is not, incidentally, an "average" age distribution, since a good two-thirds of all Soviet Russians were born later than 1917.

Because this book is not organized in the manner of an opinion poll, the reader has to work out his own specific reasons for the despair or hostility that these people feel about Soviet Russia. The old colonel says directly, "Soviet citizens give too much and get too little," but his own difficulties seem to have been largely those of a man out of touch with his times. He complains that he was reprimanded when his regiment did not subscribe amply enough to a government bond issue, that the political agents assigned to serve with his troops made good soldiering impossible, that he had trouble because his wife was not of proletarian origin. A woman biologist says she knew in 1933, when she was eighteen, that the famine of that year was "created artificially" by the government, and knew also that she must not go in for the study of history because the party frowned upon historic truth.

The housewife felt cheated out of her happiness, first when her apolitical husband was arrested and exiled for no stated reason, and again when, having divorced him and remarried, on the promise that this would bring her a job and an end of persecution, she got neither. Still another young woman, born in 1926, indicates that she believed everything she was told while growing up, and that she remained in Germany with her mother because "Mama did not have the energy to face life again in Russia." ("Mama is in Minsk looking for work" we read in her diary, and we wonder about security of employment in the U.S.S.R.) The factory worker had a bad time, starting when he was a lumberjack in Archangel and his crew had been done out of their pay, to the time when, as a factory foreman, he was tortured for forty-eight days because a subordinate of his had wrecked a lathe. A self-exile to Germany was a girl chemistry student, whose father was anti-Soviet, and who seems from early youth to have felt only hatred for the régime. The carpenter, an illegitimate son of a peasant woman, talked too much and was hounded from town to town. This seems to be why, when the Germans retreated, he piled his effects on a cart and accompanied them.

The high official, who was evidently a tough lad, made his way in the party quite as the Tammany careerists used to do. He was offended by two things in particular: He was put under a woman boss, who insisted that "political ideology" must be written into manuals on boxing and other sports; and he was forced by the political police to connive in the arrest of two friends. Finally, we have the *kulak,* who writes with brevity, dignity, and withering contempt of the methods by which he was "persuaded" that his farm ought to be fused into a collective, and of the way in which the authorities



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cheated and bullied the members of the collective.

Whatever may be attractive in Russian life—the ballet, the "culture park," the holidays on the Crimean Riviera, the sense of belonging to a proud, vigorous, and almost matchlessly powerful nation—is not mentioned by the thirteen. On the other hand, much that is drab and hideous fills their memories, at some times rancorously and at others as plain fact. Two wives found that they had to divorce exiled husbands they loved, and remarry to retain citizen status—that is, the right to hold a domestic passport, rent lodgings, and get a job.

Commonest of all in these life stories is the evidence of the pervading presence and activity of the political police. Because the colonel had in former days been acquainted with one or two of the army chiefs purged in 1937, he was summoned and asked point-blank: "How long have you been a spy for a foreign power?" Because the woman biologist was already in Germany when the Russian forces arrived, an NKVD interrogator told her: "What you are trying to say is that you voluntarily went to Germany." Because a student officer's isolated unit straggled homeward after defeat in battle, he was asked: "Tell us for what purpose the *Gestapo* sent you here!" To the foreman, who had not wrecked the lathe, the police agent said: "Tell me to what subversive organization you belong and who gave you orders to produce the damage at the factory." There could be no better proof of the truth observed a century ago, by a Frenchman travelling in Tsarist Russia, that tyranny is the product of two sorts of fear—fear of government, and fear by government.

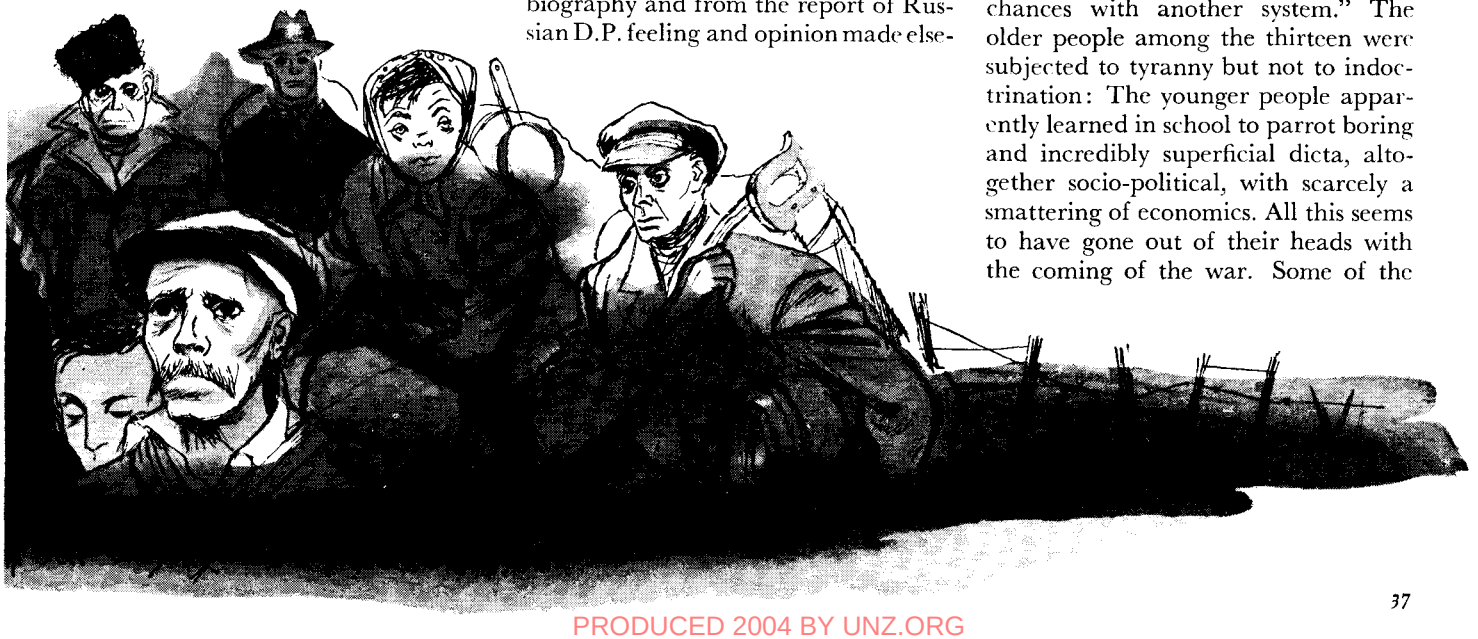
These instances are cruel and hateful but they are almost forgivable in comparison with the Soviet insistence upon making spies and *agents provocateurs* of school children.

One of the thirteen, named Kruzhin, relates that a boy named Gromov informed his *Komsomol* (youth movement) leader that a schoolmate had in his possession a Trotskyist pamphlet. This set off a chain reaction. Kruzhin defended the accused, and when the *Komsomol* leader remained unconvinced, Kruzhin burst out: "Whom do you consider an example of political awareness? Gromov? This opportunist who criticized the party at the time of the bread shortages?" Immediately the leader pricked up his ears. A second culprit! "Tell me in detail," he said, "everything you know about Gromov's conduct during the bread shortages." Meanwhile, our noble young Kruzhin was told by another boy, Isayev, that he suddenly remembered seeing that Trotskyist pamphlet before Gromov revealed its existence. Whereupon Kruzhin, trained to be a proper *Komsomol* prig, said virtuously: "Unless you report this to the secretary of the organization, I will be forced to." Isayev did report it; but before he was expelled for negligence of his duty as stool-pigeon, he managed to get in a (true) accusation against our Kruzhin—who became the subject of a "declaration of political nonconfidence" by the other children.

The reader will observe profound differences between the impressions to be gathered from these fragments of autobiography and from the report of Russian D.P. feeling and opinion made elsewhere in this issue by Mr. Deutscher. The explanation may be that Mr. Deutscher received answers to questions which he framed, whereas the editors of *Thirteen Who Fled* asked no questions but merely persuaded each of thirteen people to tell his own story. Mr. Deutscher asked political and ideological questions and received political and ideological replies. But the thirteen give no indication of any concern with ideology. What is most striking about this book is the following:

First, the total materialism, almost animalism, of these thirteen people—animalism at least in the sense in which we are all animals when concentrating on pain. With one exception, you would never know from them that they had lost anything spiritual—certainly not what we call freedom; and they do not say that freedom is what they have gained or hope to gain by remaining outside Soviet Russia. It is impossible not to conclude, from this evidence, that the very idea of freedom holds no meaning for the Russian mind.

The second astounding conclusion that we must draw is that these people have no degree whatever of political maturity. They were not, properly speaking, really propagandized; they were merely trained, like so many circus animals—and in them the training did not take, because, for most of them, material life was too hard to leave their reflexes free for deep conditioning. No one says: "I ran away from tyranny, nevertheless I believe in socialism and collectivism." No one says: "I ran away because I always have been, or have learned to be, an individualist." Or: "I have seen that Communism is a failure and I now wish to take my chances with another system." The older people among the thirteen were subjected to tyranny but not to indoctrination: The younger people apparently learned in school to parrot boring and incredibly superficial dicta, altogether socio-political, with scarcely a smattering of economics. All this seems to have gone out of their heads with the coming of the war. Some of the



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younger people were enthusiastic workers in the youth movements; but their enthusiasm was plainly for something without mental content, like a hiking club. If this were the only evidence available, we should have to say positively that Russians are not nearly so fervent about formal Communism as Americans are about free enterprise. Stalinism may be a "religion" in so far as a prophet named Stalin is worshiped. But if there is a religion in Russia, this book indicates that it would be no different if Stalin happened to be a follower of Mussolini instead of Lenin. It is curious, meanwhile, that while all these witnesses mention the purge of the generals in 1937, and remember the fear and horror it inspired, not one mentions the purges of the political and intellectual leaders.

Equally important is the revelation that in the U.S.S.R. these people did not find that fundamental desideratum which every socialist in Europe is seeking and for which many Americans are ready to surrender certain of the beliefs of their fathers—security. There was apparently no economic security: Jobs were a matter of implicit servility, and all forms of labor were, in sum, contract labor performed at the will and on the terms of a remote, anonymous, and hated employer. Of course there was no political security: the reign of terror may have been intermittent, but it recurred too frequently to be even intermittently forgotten. Finally, there was a distinct sense of class consciousness, not so much perhaps in differences in purchasing power as in the terrible distinction between the rulers and the ruled, the privileged and the unprivileged, the to-be-feared and the afraid.

What we read in this book is that these people were in effect driven out of a drab, unhappy country by the strain of everyday living, which was too great to be borne. And the strain was not the product so much of material privation as of governmental tyranny. Unless we are to assume that the editors chanced upon thirteen men and women with much less fortitude, much less innate love of country, much less capacity for neighborliness than the "average" in Soviet Russia, we are bound to conclude that life under Stalin is more unbearable than life anywhere else on the planet. — Lewis Galantière

Contributions

The Reader Reports

The articles appearing on this page were contributed by readers in response to the theme question:

What should be the role of organized labor in politics?

"Objective, Militant . . ."

Labor's role in politics should be that which any legitimate civic, service, or fraternal organization essays. Labor should concern itself with the urgency of teaching its members the importance of an informed citizenry. It should devote some of its effort to the task of organizing intelligence so that the program can be carried out.

The Taft-Hartley law virtually forced organized labor into political action. If labor had failed to interpret this piece of legislation as anything but class legislation designed to hamper and eventually destroy labor's organizational potency, it is quite likely that the Taft-Hartley law would, by now, have been amended to make it even more distasteful to the trade-union movement. The fact that labor did take up the cudgels last November to change some of the personnel of Congress gives point to the urgency of even further participation in politics, and on a nonpartisan basis.

Labor's role in politics should not be passive. It should be objective, militant and set to the tempo of these times. Labor should maintain a consistent interest in political matters because its ultimate solution of the problems inherent in employer-employee relations will be found in legislation. By this I do not wish to have it inferred that I believe legislation alone can solve these problems.

The Taft-Hartley law merely added confusion to a situation that might have been improved if management had been willing to return to the first principles of collective bargaining under the guarantees of the Wagner Labor Relations Act. But Congress is determined to define a labor policy, and as long as it is disposed to this view, labor should have some concern not only over what Congress undertakes but over who constitute the personnel of Congress.

Labor should take a broad view of this matter, and be alert always to the possibility that political quacks and charlatans will come on the scene and seek labor's support on the mere assertion that they will vote for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley law, or some other law offensive to organized labor. Labor must view all issues affecting the common weal impersonally and unselfishly. It cannot predicate its political interest on selfish interest, nor can it afford to identify itself with any legislation calculated to benefit organized labor alone.

Labor's role must be an honest role or its participation in politics will boomerang with such force that its effectiveness—politically and economically—will be destroyed for a long time to come.

A. F. Lockhart
St. Paul, Minnesota

The Third Alternative

Ideally, labor would seem to have three alternatives: to organize a separate political party, as in Britain; to exert pressure through its political influence on existing parties, or to develop a reservoir of able and statesmanlike leaders who can take their places in the ranks of the "governing class" along with representatives from industry, commerce, and the professions.

The first alternative has been tried without much success. The interests of labor are many-faceted: workers are consumers; they also are representatives of different industries and trades.

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The second alternative has been tried with moderate success, but it leaves organized labor forever outside the gates of government—privileged to shout, but never to guide legislation and administration from within. Much more effective would be the "infiltration" of government by responsible labor leaders appointed or elected to the branches of government with which labor is directly concerned—the Labor Department (especially the Conciliation Service), the Public Health Service, and even the diplomatic corps.

It has never been the practice in this country for the "governing classes" to be drawn from any one income group. Our politicians and statesmen have come from upper- and middle-income groups, from all industries, and from a variety of educational groups. It would be entirely in line with historical tradition for the leaders of organized labor in this country to be drafted into the ranks of government. It would be in the best interests of labor—and in the best interests of society. For a laboring class given responsibility would be, in time, a laboring class grown to maturity and statesmanship.

BARBARA K. FITTS
Capon Springs, West Virginia

Purposeful Schizophrenia

Big government, big cities, big business and big labor we have with us, and we know that we shall continue to have them with us. We are not so sure, however, that with all the above "bigs," we also have the crucial concomitant of an ever-increasing sense of responsibility on the part of ever-greater numbers of citizens. This we must have if we are to have not only "big government" but also "big democracy."

Perhaps the greatest contribution that organized labor can make in politics is in the training of statesmen, politicians and citizens. Ideally, millions of Americans can and do gain experience in cooperative action and democratic procedures through participation in labor-union affairs.

And how should this remarkable human potential be applied? Working within the traditional two-party system has advantages over a separate special-interest party in that it allows compromise among competing interests at the buffer level of intraparty politics rather than submitting all differences to the rigors of formal government decision. Also such a course of supporting either Democrats or Republicans, depending upon their record, would allow many problems to be settled on a local or sectional level and so increase the citizens' sense of participation.

The final suggestion as to the role of labor in politics is by all odds the most difficult. It is that with its increasing power labor must deliberately set out to develop a schizophrenic personality. For labor must ever balance (as must all other groups) its special interests as a group of diverse workingmen, and its interests as citizens concerned with the general welfare.

MICHAEL O. SAWYER
Baldwinsville, New York

Fire and Drive

The blue-collared man with the dinnerpail carries with him into politics the power to shape the future of the American nation, both in its internal affairs and its relations with the remainder of the world.

Gradually, as the air clears over the rubble of postwar Europe, labor is seeing that poverty and starvation afar have a direct effect upon living conditions at home. Prosperity in America depends in part upon this country's ability to sell its products abroad—and men without money do not make good buyers.

Within this nation, conditions exist which provide a fertile ground for beliefs that are detrimental to democracy. Labor must realize that an idea cannot be purged; that behind every movement there is a need. The Communism which frightens us today is, after all, only the top of the iceberg.

And what are America's grave contemporary problems? Labor need only look around. In the shadows of the White House stand some of the worst slums in the world. In our biggest industrial cities people cannot find homes enough to go around. Slums breed crime and disease; slums warp and twist the personalities of the men who will be tomorrow's citizens.

In the South, both Negroes and whites have limited opportunities for education, substandard housing, poor food. Colored people as well as Jews, Catholics and other "nonconformists" are never far from the long arm of the Ku Klux Klan. Millions of voters are disfranchised because they cannot afford to pay poll taxes. And the sharecropper in his tinderbox shack is not unknown.

Throughout America, men are denied equal opportunities to work in the fields for which they are best qualified —because of the colors of their skins, their national origins or their religious beliefs. It has been said that one can always tell a Communist by his enthusiasm, his fire, his drive. Labor, making up roughly forty-five per cent of America's population, must put the same enthusiasm, fire and drive into the job of making Democracy work.

CLOTYE MURDOCK
Detroit, Michigan

Instructions to Reader Contributors

Theme: *How would you present the case for democracy to people who have been brought up under totalitarianism?*

1. All contributors should state the question to which the letter is an answer.
2. Letters should not exceed four hundred words.
3. Contributors are asked to print name, address, and occupation.
4. Contributions should be addressed to Reader Contributions, *The Reporter*, 220 East 42 Street, New York 17, New York.
5. Contributions to be printed will be selected by The Editors.
6. Each contributor whose letter is printed will receive a check for $25.00.
7. All contributions, whether printed or not, will become the property of *The Reporter*.
8. All contributions on this issue's question must be postmarked not later than August 23, 1949.

Reader contributors are asked to follow instructions carefully in order to avoid confusion between contributions on the theme-question and regular Letters to the Editor.

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Letters

To The Reporter

Mob-Mongering?

To the Editor:—*The Reporter* needs greater variety and more discriminating editing.

Too many of its articles are badly written, dull. They defeat your purpose.

And why resort to mob-mongering? Does "Weekend"—July 5, page twenty-one—with its unnecessary last line advance the cause of One World? Is the death of a Negro more tragic than the death of a white man?

HENRY BLANCHARD
Hartford, Connecticut

[*Yes, sometimes.*—EDITOR]

Crucial Social Question

To the Editor:—Let me compliment *The Reporter* on its issue devoted to labor-management relationships. That was one of the most beautiful issues of any publication dealing with the labor issue I have seen.

Your opinion of the part the Federal government should play in the labor field is very realistic and to be commended. You present the true scope of governmental activities, as directing all efforts to the common good. You obliged the Federal government to be concerned with all things necessary for the common good, and yet you properly limited it when you left to labor and management those things which they can adequately settle by themselves—of course when these two groups cannot come to an agreeable settlement on their own efforts, and the problem is of large enough concern to the nation as a whole, why then the government must step in to preserve proper balance.

DANIEL JACOBOWSKI
St. Paul, Minnesota

Books and Barrels

To the Editor:—I was quite interested to read the article entitled "Beck and Reuther" in your July 5 issue. One point that caught my attention was the following statement on page six about Mr. Reuther: "If he was not the first to raise the question of wage increases without price increases, he was the first to pin it down at the bargaining table and make it a national issue with his phrase 'Look at the books' in the 113-day General Motors strike of 1946."

I thought you might be interested to know that shortly after the end of the UAW's strike against General Motors, Mr. Reuther repudiated the "Look at the books" tactic as a serious basic approach. His statement was reported from the UAW's convention in Atlantic City on March 24, 1946, and was printed in the New York *Times* March 25. The story, by Walter W. Ruch, reporting the rival charges made by Mr. Reuther and R. J. Thomas, then president of the UAW, contains the following: "On the other hand, Mr. Reuther admitted that his demand, made prior to and early in the General Motors strike, that the corporation open its books so as to provide a means of determining its ability to pay 'was just a maneuver to win public support and to get the company over a barrel.' He added that Mr. Thomas knew that very well."

Some of Mr. Reuther's admirers outside of the labor movement were later reported to be quite disillusioned by this statement. Similarly, I wonder if it does not change the perspective in which *The Reporter* views the "Look at the books" tactic.

VAN BUREN THORNE, JR.
New York City

Flavius and Genet

To the Editor:—I agree with your policy of anonymity; this seems very good sense to me, inasmuch as Americans have become so by-line-conscious that they will agree with what a writer says, or disagree, simply on the basis of his name. However, I cannot go the whole way with you on the "Flavius" signature, since it seems to me a little coy. This may simply be a personal prejudice; knowing that *The New Yorker's* Gênet is really Janet Flanner doesn't make me a bit happier, since most other people know it too. And I don't believe that it adds much to the authenticity of the reports.

It also appears to me that on occasion your articles tend rather to the ideas than to the facts; I take as an example the article by your European Editor in the issue of July 5, in which he discusses the Communist comeback in the French labor movement. Here I don't question the facts as stated, but simply those which are not stated. In France, it is the government which regulates all wages on a ratio basis; that is, the basic wage of the unskilled industrial worker is the No. 1 coefficient. All other wages in industry, exclusive of top management, are computed in proportion to this basic wage. Should the government be compelled to raise the wage of the average unskilled industrial worker, those of all others, including the people whose salaries are already adequate, would also be raised. The fault, apparently, lies in the system as it was established, but it doesn't alter the fact that the government is in a tough spot.

I think it should also be added that the statement in the article that the French government has leaned more toward benefiting the farmers than the workers is something of an overstatement. French workers today enjoy certain benefits they never had before the war. The average company pays out approximately fifty per cent of the workers' salary for such things as health insurance, social security, unemployment insurance, and so forth. If wages were increased, those companies might be hard pressed to meet the new demands.

DONALD BRAIDER
New York City

Dear Reader:

This Russian issue of ours is not part of the current literature of hatred and fear. We asked reasonable, prudent, and experienced men to write quietly about what they know. George Fischer, who was brought up in the Soviet Union, is now a Junior Fellow at Harvard. Isaac Deutscher is the author of the forthcoming *Stalin; a Political Biography.* N. S. Timasheff is a sociologist at Fordham University who, in *The Great Retreat,* studied Communism's growth and decline. An American officer who observed "Private Feodorov" in Poland and Germany for several years writes under the pen name of Colonel Atkins. Ellsworth Raymond served with the American Embassy in Moscow for six years. Nicolas Nabokov is a Russian-born composer and critic, and an old friend of Prokofieff. Dr. Hugo Skala, formerly Chief of the Economics Division in the Czechoslovak Ministry of Finance, came to this country on a mission in April, 1949, resigned, and stayed here.

The Editors

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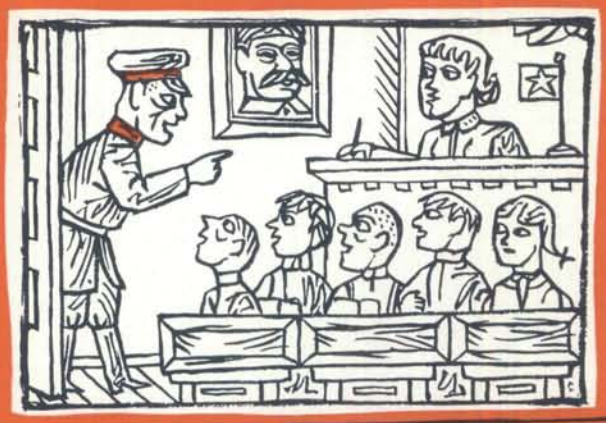

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